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ABSTRACT

Developed by the Oregon Elementary English Project, this curriculum unit on poetry is intended for grades one and two. The primary objective of the unit is to encourage the appreciation of poetry among children. The suggested questions or exercises are limited to simple comprehension or discussion questions; no attempt is made at any sort of formal literary study. Because of the limited ability to read among children at this level, many of the poems will have to be read by the teacher. The sixty-nine poems are accompanied by introductory suggestions, stated objectives for comprehension and composition, activities, and drawings. (HOD)

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ED 087004

Levels A - B

OREGON ELEMENTARY ENGLISH PROJECT

POEMS

Volume 2

Department of English
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon

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Levels A - B

POEMS

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THE LITERATURE STRAND

What follows is an extended discussion of the rationale and goals of the experimental curriculum in literature developed by the Oregon Elementary English Project. The levels covered by the curriculum are grades one through six. Grades one and two make one natural grouping, with no attempt made to identify the materials of the curriculum by grade level. So, too, with grades three and four, and grades five and six. Let us deal with each group separately.

PART ONE: POEMS AND STORIES, LEVELS A AND B (GRADES ONE AND TWO)

It is a bit misleading to speak of a "curriculum in literature" for the first and second grades, if one takes the word to mean a program of formal study. We are advocating no such program here; we use the word simply to indicate that the work of the first and second grades is the beginning of what will become a program of formal study as students move through the grades on into junior and senior high school. What we hope to achieve in the primary grades is the building of a foundation of enjoyment of literature--the preparation of fertile ground. The selections we offer in this anthology were picked primarily because students should enjoy them. Any of the suggested questions or exercises that deal with the selection itself are limited to simple comprehension or discussion questions; no attempt is made at any sort of formal literary study. We expect that the teacher will normally have to read most of the selections to the children because of their limited ability to read by themselves at this age.

The selections include both poems and stories. The stories were chosen with an eye to the work of later grades, and here a word or two of explanation might be in order. Certain folk and fairy tales have become part of the common pool of shared experience of speakers and writers of the English language, and hence are a source of allusion and reference and recurring themes in much of the literature that students will be reading in later years. Indeed, such allusions and references to standard themes have a wider influence than the purely literary: a sociologist will speak of "the Cinderella myth" and its relationship to American culture; an anthropologist will refer to the recurring motif of the disguised hero in the folklore of different cultures. Such allusions as well as those that occur in the literature he will later study, will be meaningless to the student unless he is familiar with the stories and themes to which they refer. The narratives we include here are the beginning of students' acquisition of that common body of "reservoir" literature which has become a sort of intellectual shorthand.

It will be noticed that we are using the traditional versions of these stories, rather than simplified adaptations or the prettified, Walt-Disneyized versions that abound. Students have a listening vocabulary

that is large enough to permit them to understand these original versions. It is not necessary that they understand every word in a story before they can enjoy it; we learn new words by hearing (or seeing) them often enough so that we gradually come to understand their meaning from their use. And since it is the stories in their original form to which all allusions and references are made, we are using them instead of the anemic variants of the Walt Disney type. Let's face it: the wicked wolf ate the first two little pigs and then got boiled and eaten himself; another wicked wolf really ate Red Riding Hood's grandmother; and the wicked witch in "Hansel and Gretel" was indeed burned up in her own oven. That's the way the stories go. To pretty them up is a tasteless exercise in false delicacy.

Of the poetry there is not so much need to speak. At this grade level there is not the same body of reservoir poetry that there is of prose. Such poetry is either of a greater sophistication and complexity, which students will not meet until much later in the grades; or else it is verse of the Mother Goose sort, which most of them presumably have already encountered.

The main purpose with the poems, as with the stories, is that students should enjoy the selections. We want them to approach the later grades familiar with verse and fond of it, and less inclined to adopt the pose that poetry is somehow sissy stuff.

One final remark. The selections included here are by no means intended to be students' only literary fare. This is simply one item on the menu. It is an important one, and will become more so in their study of literature in later grades. But to claim a central importance for such a small slice of the total pie available in the rich banquet of children's literature would be an arrogance we do not intend. We merely suggest that this be folded in along with a great deal more in the language arts program.

PART TWO: LEVELS C AND D (GRADES THREE AND FOUR)

The readings and exercises we have provided for grades three and four are designed to build on the work of grades one and two, and to be another step towards a goal which will not be reached until many years later in the student's academic career. That goal is the development, not of a literary critic, a professor of English, a college English major, or even necessarily of a person who lists "reading good literature" among his hobbies in the high school yearbook; rather, it is the development of a person who has been exposed to good literature, has been taught to recognize and understand the function of some of those qualities of literature which can be discussed objectively, and has developed a respect for literature as a valid medium of artistic expression and a tolerance for those to whom literary study is a serious concern. The "curriculum" for grades one and two begins the exposure process, and that for grades three and four continues it; the formal training comes later.

The principal criterion for choosing the selections for these grades has been enjoyment. Most students should enjoy most of these selections; other children have. Indeed, so important is this criterion that it should override any other consideration. In treating any of these selections, if a class doesn't enjoy it, it should be dropped. Force-feeding doesn't work. But besides the criterion of enjoyment, several other considerations have governed our selection of titles. Since these considerations form the rationale for including literature in the students' language arts program at all, it might be well to explore some of them. We hope it will help explain what this "curriculum" for grades three and four is designed to accomplish.

These considerations can be grouped under what is generally, and loosely, referred to as "our cultural heritage." This rather pompous and--in an increasingly heterogeneous culture--vague phrase is merely one way of stating that literature, as central to humane studies, is one of the primary means by which we identify ourselves to ourselves and relate ourselves to others. Teachers are familiar with the ritual of identification nearly every student goes through, usually on his notebook cover: "John Jones, 201 Main Street, Mill City, Iowa, United States, North America, Northern Hemisphere, Earth, Solar System, Galaxy, Universe." The child is identifying himself at a particular point in time and space. Literature serves an analogous function. It provides us, as one writer has said, with "a superb library of human situations, an endless repertory of encounters." If we take "cultural heritage" in its broadest sense--the individual's discovery of his relationship to the universal human condition--then literature provides us with those encounters and situations through which we begin the process of defining and identifying ourselves. Grades three and four are not too early to begin that process.

There are other aspects of the idea of "cultural heritage" which justify the teaching of literature--and literature of the sort included here--in the students' language arts program. Let us mention them briefly.

The universal human condition seems to include a similar response to similar stimuli no matter what part of the globe we look at. Thus we find in every culture the same sorts of literature--fables, myths, folk and fairy tales, and the like. All cultures have a mythology, a series of stories attempting to explain natural phenomena in understandable terms, an attempt to explain the natural, non-human world in human terms. We include here myths from the Classical period, from Norse mythology, and from different African and American Indian mythologies. Fables are a standard literary form--still going strong in Pogo--used to describe certain aspects of human behavior. We include the Aesop fables which are most central to our literary tradition, and use for comparison a fable from Turkey.

Similarly, folk tales and fairy tales illustrate universal human concerns, wishes, dreams, and predicaments. We have included familiar

and unfamiliar stories from several countries. For example, students should enjoy recognizing the familiar Cinderella story in its Chinese version. Similarly, they should recognize the recurring motif of the encounter with magical wee folk in stories from Ireland and Russia as well as the more familiar ones from Grimm.

Since our students are, after all, living in an English-speaking country, and since they will be reading in later years literature written in English, the majority of the selections in this curriculum are those which are central to the traditions of that literature. Hence the prominence given to Classical and Norse mythology, upon which so much literary allusion and reference depends. Hence too our inclusion of legends and hero tales which are a necessary part of every child's reservoir of literary knowledge--Robin Hood, William Tell, Aladdin, Paul Bunyan, Sindbad, etc. Since there is not enough time or space to include everything, what we have given in these books is what seems to us essential for students' later reading and study of literature. The more this core can be supplemented with readings from as many different sources as possible, the better.

In brief, then, the selections included in these books are designed to enrich students' cultural heritage--as human beings sharing with all other human beings certain responses and certain ways of explaining the world and human nature to ourselves; and as speakers and readers of English beginning to build up a necessary reservoir of familiarity with literature written in the English language.

Let us repeat what we said at the start. The main goal of these readings for the third and fourth grade years is that students enjoy the selections for their own sake. Force-feeding, or the dictation of concepts and connections, will destroy the whole purpose of the program. As we have said, the principal function of the curriculum on these levels is exposure, not formal training.

There are seven volumes in the third and fourth grade literature curriculum. Six of them are for distribution to the students, one for each child. They are attractively bound and illustrated, and we hope they will stimulate many students to independent reading. There is a volume of fables, one of Norse mythology, one of Greek mythology, one of African and Indian mythology, one of folk and fairy tales, and one of verse. In the teacher's edition of each of these volumes are suggestions for questions and activities which may be followed if they seem to work, or which may be supplemented with ones of the teacher's own devising.

We have not written any detailed lesson plans for these selections, or specified any particular sequence in which they should be presented. Generally speaking, however, we do not recommend grinding through them one right after the other. In other words, instead of teaching all the fables one after the other, the teacher should spot them throughout the year in convenient clusters, and use the suggested questions and activities as seems appropriate.

The volumes of mythology are written on the assumption that the teacher will start with the Greek, go on to the Norse, and end with the African and Indian. We suggest that this sequence be tried first. Each collection repeats certain themes, i.e., How the world was made, How the seasons came to be, etc. A good class should be able to see these recurring themes in cultures from all times and places.

The folk and fairy tales are collected under three main thematic groupings, Encounter With Wee Folk, The Foolish Use of Wishes, and Unlikely Successes. There are four stories under each grouping, and again it is up to the teacher and the class to determine how much is done with the idea of repeated motifs.

The other volume is distributed to the teacher only. It is a collection of longer stories than those mentioned above--hero tales and legends of Robin Hood, Paul Bunyan, etc. We suggest that these be used during story hour to read to the students, since the length and vocabulary will probably be too advanced for many students to read by themselves.

The volume of verse, like all the others, is primarily for pleasure. We have included in the teacher's copy some suggestions for teaching. If a class enjoys it, they might try to write some poems of their own, or try their own illustrations of some of the poems.

What we have supplied, then, is a collection of stories and poems which we hope students will enjoy reading or having read to them, with some suggestions on how tney might be presented. If the children enjoy them, and remember some of them--in other words, if they begin to learn to like literature--that is sufficient. Anything above that is gravy.

PART THREE: LEVELS V-VI (GRADES FIVE AND SIX)

The literature curriculum for grades five and six is an attempt to introduce an added dimension to the curriculum in English in the upper elementary grades. That added dimension is the study of some of the formal aspects of literature.

It is a supplement to, not a substitute for, existing curricula.

The basic tactic to be followed is to build on enjoyment. In other words, if students like a selection, and are interested in what they are doing, the teacher can slip in a little study of some of the concepts introduced below. The teacher should not force things, not over-analyze.

The curriculum is divided into two main sections, Poetry and Narrative (the latter including both prose and poetry). Since the formal elements of poetry are more easily extracted for discussions, the main emphasis falls on poetry. It should probably be taught before narrative. The central thesis of the poetry curriculum is that every poetic device is

used by students in their normal discourse. The central thesis of the narrative section is not so easily capsuled. (See the discussion below.)

The teacher should not be alarmed by the bulk. It is, after all, mimeographed material on one side of the sheet only. It is also two years' worth of material. The teacher need not master it all at once. Each unit is of a manageable size.

The discussion of the central concept of each unit is background information, and is not meant to be passed on verbatim to students. It is much more mature and detailed than students can possibly absorb.

It is our hope that this curriculum, if it is flexibly and imaginatively taught, will increase students' informed enjoyment of literature, both now and in later years.

Rationale

The curriculum we have developed herein is, frankly, "cognitive." By cognitive we mean a curriculum which will teach a student to identify and discuss those elements in a literary structure which are susceptible of a more or less objective description. Those formal elements of a work of literature which can be identified and discussed are certainly not all there is to literature, but they are a large part of it. Without an understanding of basic critical concepts and terminology, any response to a work remains subjective and impressionistic.

The curriculum presented here is designed to build on, rather than supplant, the basic emotional appeal of literature. We assume that the teacher has engaged the students' interest in the work, and has encouraged the sort of response and enjoyment which is fundamental.

We can reduce the assumptions which underlie this program to a few declarative sentences. First, the emotional appeal of literature is probably its most important element, but it is precisely this element which cannot be taught. This is the old truism that "you cannot teach enjoyment." Or, putting it another way, "You cannot teach literature, you can only teach about it."

Second, students have minds as well as emotions, and an intellectual understanding of some of the elements of literary structures can increase the enjoyment of the work. One of the higher abilities which distinguishes man from beast is his ability to intellectualize, to objectify. To fail to provide an opportunity for the exercise of that faculty is to fail to help the "whole child" develop.

Third, the teaching of the formal elements of literary structures should always be an outgrowth of reading for pleasure. As we mentioned above, the concepts introduced in this curriculum are designed to build on, rather than replace, reading for enjoyment. We realize that of the total

language arts program, literature forms a fairly small part. Further, we would suggest strongly that of the literary selections read in any given year, a fairly small part of them be given any formal treatment of analysis. Nothing kills pleasure in reading faster than over-analysis.

To achieve the purposes outlined above, we have devised a series of brief lesson plans, each centered around some literary concept--rhyme, or simile, or allusion, or the like. Each concept is treated in three selections ranging from the simple to the more complex. In this way the teacher should be able to adjust the choice of selections to the level of ability of the individual class or student.

Poetry: Mostly Lyric

Since the elements of poetry are in many ways more easy to deal with than those of narrative, we have begun with poetry. While we have imposed no rigid sequence on the order in which the concepts should be introduced, in general it is probably best to move from the more concrete to the more thematic or abstract. Thus, for instance, the idea of rhyme should probably precede the treatment of meter, or the idea of imagery precede that of metaphor.

We have broken down poetic concepts into four main categories, each a little more complex than the one that precedes it. As we mentioned, each concept in each category is treated on three levels of difficulty.

The first category is the one with the most obvious elements. Poetry is a system of sounds and rhythms, and the lessons introduce the basic rhymes and meters. In this category the students move from a study of rhyme and rhyme scheme through study of stanza patterns to a treatment of metrics and simple scansion.* Since children have used rhyme and rhythm from their Mother Goose days, and since they can sing every TV jingle they ever heard, it seems a good idea to start them where they already are.

The second category treats poetry as a system of words. Again, the category begins with the most elementary level, the concept of diction or word choice, with the related questions of "hard" or "soft" diction and denotation and connotation. The sequence continues through words used for imagery to groups of words used for complex imagery or comparison such as simile and metaphor.

The next category deals with what can be called the "situations" of poetry. Here we introduce the idea of the speaker in the poem and the situation or dramatic context in which the poem is being said. This begins, on a very elementary level, the introduction to the idea of the dramatis persona or the assumed identity of the speaker of a poem, and the very important idea that the speaker is quite probably not the author.

*The unit on metrics should be regarded as supplementary. It may be used or not, or it may be saved for later in the year.

Further, for an understanding of many poems, it is important to know what the events were that triggered the utterance, and where the speaker is in relation to the events mentioned in the poem. Such considerations are invaluable in interpreting the tone or attitude of the writer, and understanding his purpose. Finally, this category includes a consideration of the rhetorical patterns of poetry, i.e., what ideas are expressed and in what order.

The last category is in many ways quite similar to the one just mentioned. It deals with the questions of tone, of attitude, of the author's point of view towards his subject, of the whole area of values. In this category the students will concern themselves with such things as satire, irony, and such indirect modes.

A note on the lesson plans. As we have said, all the selections have been chosen for their appeal to elementary school children. The title or text of the work, and the literary concept it can be used to illustrate, appear on the first page of the unit. Following that, we include a discussion of the work as a whole, based on what children might find enjoyable in it. Following that, we discuss the literary concept illustrated by the work, with suggested discussion questions, alternate selections, and suggested activities and follow up. This organization makes available to the teacher a collection of good children's literature which has proven successful in the classroom, with the option of moving from there to a discussion of a particular literary concept, should it seem desirable. In other words, the curriculum provides an anthology of good children's literature, arranged in an order of increasing sophistication, and supplemented--no supplanted--by a sequential introduction to the elements of literary techniques and analysis.

Narrative: Prose and Poetry

Elementary school children read a large assortment of imaginative narrative, both prose and poetry. They read folk tales, fables, myths, fantasy and science fiction, realistic fiction, as well as ballads and other narrative poems such as "The Cremation of Sam McGee" or "The Highwayman." Quite a conglomerate assortment. How does one impose any order (of a literary sort) on all that?

There are any number of ways. The approach we recommend below, just one of several, is designed to give young students some understanding of those elements which are basic to all narrative, and which indeed seem part of our instinctive way of looking at the world.

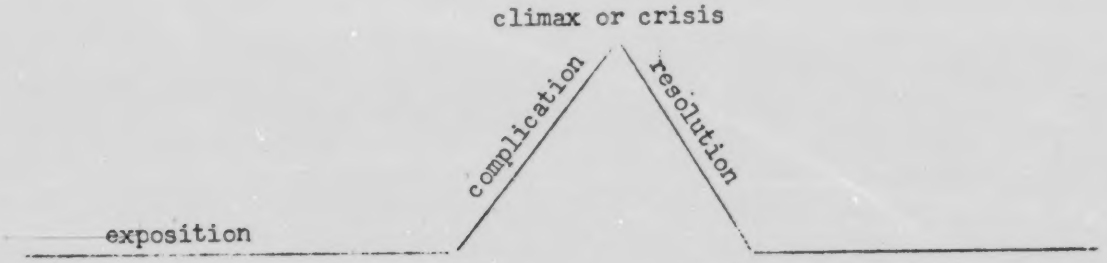
The idea mentioned in the previous paragraph, that there are elements "basic to all narrative," is worth some further development. If the statement is correct, then any narrative can be treated in the same way, whether it be in prose or verse. One of the most noxious misapprehensions in the mind of the average student is that there is a difference between prose and poetry based on its subject matter. The point we are trying to make

is that the idea of "narrative" is more fundamental than the idea of "prose vs. poetry." It doesn't matter what form the narrative takes; what matters is that it is narrative. There is more in common between "Casey at the Bat" and Peter Rabbit than there is between "Casey" and, say, "Old Ironsides."

In their study of narrative, we want students to begin to be aware of those elements common to all narrative, whatever the form it may take.

Narrative, then, is a way of saying something that is more fundamental than the ideas of prose or verse. Narrative, or "story," is such a basic element in the history of human ideas, that it is difficult to speculate on its origin. For as long as man has been a social animal he has told stories as a way of ordering and explaining his environment and his universe. The study of narrative, then, is a very human act, one that has interested man since he began to think and to imagine.

What we are talking about here is the formal structure of a narrative. The standard narrative can be broken down into its basic elements, which should be accessible to the average elementary school child. What the children should begin to see, hopefully, is the fundamental narrative structure of all story. It is basically a pyramid.



The exposition tells us who is who, where they are, and what the situation is. The complication gives us the terms of the conflict. The climax or crisis gives us the clash of the opposing forces. The resolution gives us the movement to a new state of affairs in which the forces involved in the conflict are at least temporarily at rest.

To illustrate, let us take "Casey at the Bat," which is one of the selections in the unit on Narrative. It is treated more fully in the unit, but we can use it here briefly. The first stanza gives us a rapid exposition: bottom of the ninth inning, score 4-2, two out. The complication is quite extended, as we see two men get on, and then Casey advance to the plate and get two called strikes. The climax comes with the third pitch, and then the story moves to its brief resolution in the final stanza: "There is no joy in Mudville; mighty Casey has struck out."

(A note on terminology. Such terms as "exposition," "complication," "resolution," and so on can be confusing to students. If the teacher thinks it better, terms can be used drawn from the children's existing

vocabulary. "Information" or "explanation," for instance, could be possible substitutes for "exposition." Similarly, some word like "opposition" could be substituted for "complication," and something like "solution" could be substituted for "resolution." The point is not the teaching of standard terminology, but the idea behind it.)

Within this basic pattern, which can be diagrammed on the board and discussed in terms of the dynamics of any narrative, there are all sorts of variations. The emphasis can fall on the conflict, as in "Casey at the Bat." There can be flashbacks, in which time sequence is distorted. There can be stories which concentrate on motive (Poe's "The Tell Tale Heart"). But with all the possible variations and emphasis, any narrative can be discussed in terms of its relation to this basic narrative form.

Building on such considerations, it should be possible to have students consider more subjective and evaluative questions, the same sort of questions with which the more advanced sections of the poetry sequence are concerned. What is the author's point of view? What is the tone of the story? What values are being explored and what attitude is being expressed? The sequence here, as in the poetry section, moves from simple to more complex and subjective considerations.

Again, as with the poetry, the lesson plans offer a selection of tested narratives, with a general discussion of each of a number of selected stories as a whole, indicating those points that might most profitably be discussed. In addition, special mention is made of some particular aspects of narrative form which the teacher may wish to pursue with the class. Again, also, the lessons are arranged in a planned sequence, but it is up to the teacher to determine where to begin and to what extent to follow the program.

A word of caution. With narrative, even more than with poetry, overemphasis on formal analysis would be a great mistake. The patterns of narrative are broader and vaguer, at this stage, than the patterns of poetry, and not so readily held in the mind or abstracted from the text. (Perhaps the main reason for this is that narrative tends to be longer than lyric poetry.) At any rate, it is important to remember that the concepts we suggest here are <u>not</u> to be regarded as a substitute for reading for enjoyment, that they are a supplement, not a replacement, an optional added dimension to pleasure, not a sterile catechism.

Some Practical Considerations

The units are arranged in an arbitrary order, the rationale for which is explained on page 42 above. As we have mentioned, the material was written with a hypothetical ungraded fifth and sixth grade class in mind. The teacher will want to adapt these materials to his or her particular classroom. It is clear that some students will not be able or willing to go as far along the road as others. It will be up to the teacher to determine how far to travel.

There is no need to follow the sequence we have laid out. If the teacher thinks another sequence will serve better, it should be tried. But generally speaking, a horizontal approach should be more effective than a vertical one, i.e., concepts from several categories should be treated in a cross section rather than following one to its end at the cost of excluding another. Such a procedure will soon allow for a good deal of cross reference and discussion of more than one concept in any given selection. In other words, a poem each from the lessons on imagery, diction, allusion, and irony, for example, would probably do better than <u>all</u> the poems in any one of those units.

The teacher must decide the point at which to plug in the material, and the rate at which to move. It is important for the teacher to keep in mind the ultimate goal--one which will not be realized for many years: the development of sensitive, informed, and eager readers of literature.

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"November Night" - Adelaide Crapsey
"Halloween" - Geraldine Brain Siks
"Autumn Woods" - James S. Tippett
"The Snowman" - Lima L. Henderson
"I Look outside and think . . ." - Wesley Vollmer
"White Fields" - James Stephens
"The Elf and the Dormouse" - Oliver Herford
"Names" - LeClaire G. Alger
"Do You Know" - Ethel M. Wegert
"The Bear" - Carl Memling
"Counting-Out Rhyme" - Anonymous
"When Rinky Rally Billy Bo. . ." - Wesley Vollmer

B. Short Stories

"Snow White"
"The Lad Who Went to the North Wind"
"The Big Turnip"
"Hansel and Gretel"
"The Traveling Musicians"
"Teeney Tiny"
"The Golden Goose"
"The Magic Ring"
"The Old Woman in the Wood"
"The Pancake"
"Why the Evergreen Trees Keep Their Leaves in Winter"
"How the Robin's Breast Became Red"
"East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon"
"The Three Billy-Goats Gruff"
"The Story of the Three Little Pigs"
"The Fairy"
"Brier Rose"
"Rumplestiltskin"
"The Elves and the Shoemaker"

Literature: Grades Three and Four

Fables
Greek Mythology

Norse Mythology
African and Indian Myths
Folk Tales and Fairy Tales
A Handful of Nothings, and Some Other Poems
Hero Tales and Legends

Literature: Grades Five and Six

A. Poetry

Rhyme
Metrics, Scansion
Rhyme Scheme: Stanza
Diction (Word Choice); Denotation and Connotation; Onomatopoeia
Imagery
Speaker
Dramatic Situation
Simile
Metaphor I
Metaphor II
Allusion
Idea Patterns
Point of View
Hyperbole-Irony
Symbol
The Whole Poem

B. Narrative (Prose and Verse)

"The Cat Who Walked by Himself" - Rudyard Kipling
"The Story of Keesh" - Jack London
"The Springfield Fox" - Ernest Thompson-Seton
"A Man Who Had No Eyes" - MacKinlay Kantor
"A Dangerous Guy Indeed" - Damon Runyon
"The Old Demon" - Pearl Buck
"Night Drive" - Will F. Jenkins
"Locomotive 38, the Ojibway" - William Saroyan
"Siward Digri--The Earl of Northumberland" - Earl Craig
"The Cremation of Sam McGee" - Robert W. Service
"The Highwayman" - Alfred Noyes
"The Witch of Willowby Wood" - Rowena Bennett
"Casey at the Bat" - Ernest Thayer
"Ode to Billy Joe" - Bobbie Gentry

NOTE

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If I Had a Dollar

If I had a dollar
and you had a dime,
we'd put them together
and have a good time.
We'd go to the movies
and laugh and holler.
Here's the dime,
now where's the dollar?

--W. V.

HALFWAY DOWN

Selection:

"Halfway Down" by A. A. Milne, reprinted in Now We Are Six. New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1970, page 83.

Introduction:

1. Do you have a special place in your house you particularly like? Where is it? Why do you like it? Here's a child who likes the stairs.

Comprehension:

Objective: To develop the concepts of "up," "down," "halfway," "bottom," and "top."

Introduction: Ask the class to name special places where they like to sit. Allow time for discussion of favorite places. Draw a flight of stairs on the board--or have one already drawn before you begin the lesson. (If you draw an uneven number of steps, it will be easier to identify the "halfway" stair.) Direct the class to listen carefully to find out where this child's favorite spot is located. Read the poem.

The Action: Ask the children where the child's favorite spot was located. Explore the meaning of "halfway" and have a child mark that stair. Do likewise with the bottom stair and top stair. Have a child go "up" from the halfway stair and another child go "down" from the halfway stair, etc. Read the poem through a second time for enjoyment.

Further Action: If there is a set of stairs in the auditorium or elsewhere in the building, have the children actually move up and down on stairs to directions (check on understandings of the terms you are reinforcing). The children could pretend they are going up stairs--starting from a crouched position and stretching upward--and down stairs.

Composition

Objectives:

The exercises encourage the students

to use imaginative and specific details so others may "see" their thoughts;

to describe their special spot orally.

Activities:

1. Have each student think of their own special spot and how they would describe it.

2. Have students take turns describing their spot and allowing others to have three guesses as to where the spot is located.

3. The class might plan a special spot in their classroom. It should be available to students when they have some time. They might draw or write about some of their very own thoughts that are running through their heads when they are in this special spot.

My Shadow

I have a little shadow that goes in
and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is
more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the
heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when
I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the
way he likes to grow--
Not at all like proper children,
which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller
like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that
there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children
ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every
sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's
a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie
as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the
sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on
every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an
arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was
fast asleep in bed.

--R. L. Stevenson

My Shadow

Introduction:

1. What causes your shadow? Why is it sometimes long and sometimes short?

2. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties; Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) india-rubber - rubber; arrant - naughty.

Comprehension:

1. What is the poet describing?

2. In the last stanza, why does the shadow stay in bed?

Composition

Objectives:

The exercises encourage the students to

observe carefully themselves and their environment;

imagine a situation and describe it after careful observation.

Activities:

1. Take the students outside to watch their own shadows. Talk about what their shadows did with them. Ask each student to imagine that he has a very brave little shadow that broke away.

Where would your shadow go?
What would he do?

Have the students write or tell about the adventure of the brave little shadow.

2. Using a goose-necked lamp with a large bulb and a bare wall or screen (or a slide projector will do), let students take turns experimenting with shadows.

How many different shapes can you make with one hand?
two hands?
What animal heads can you make? a rabbit? a dog?
a cat? How can you make ears? Think of the shape
of each animal's head and plan how you can make it.

See how many different shapes you can make with your whole body.

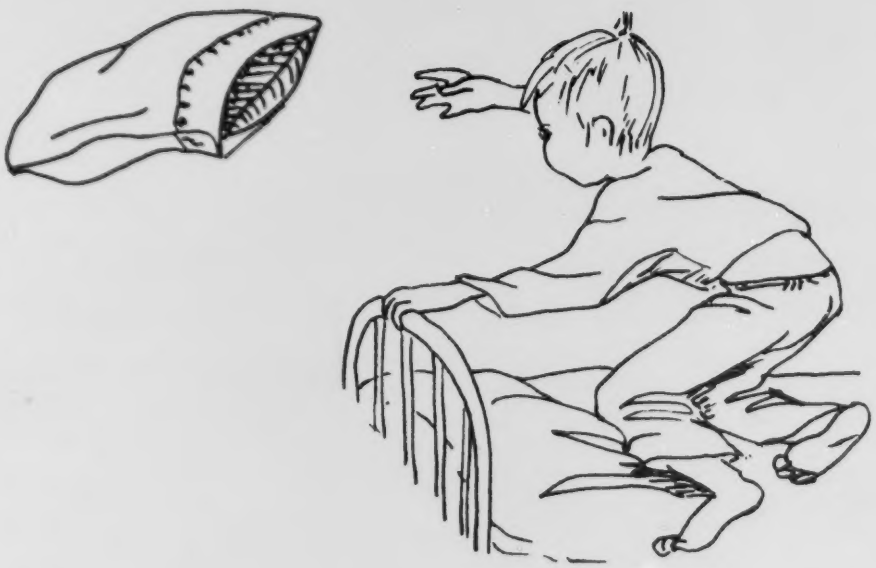
Tape record or write about your shadow-play experience. What things did you make? How did you make them?

A Muddy Good Time

I use soap.
I'm no dope.
But I love dirt
and it can't hurt
to laugh and play
in mud and clay,
to kick up dust,
my hair all mussed,
caked with grime,
muddy good time.
But I'm no dope
and I use soap.
I take a shower
and smell like a flower.

--W. V.

"Going to Bed" from Around and About by Marchette Chute. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1957.



Introduction:

Do your parents get mad when you dawdle, going to bed? What does "dawdle" mean? Do they tell you to hurry up?

Language

Objectives:

The following activities can be used to help students identify some of the parts of sentences by function:

parts that tell when (time adverbials)
parts that stand for whatever we are talking about (pronouns)
parts that tell why (reason adverbials).

Activities:

1. Ask who is talking and then have students find all the words that stand for the person talking (I, me, and my).

2. In stanzas 4 and 5, have students find the lines that tell why.

3. In stanza 5, ask them to find a group of words that tells when.

"Waking" from I Feel the Same Way by Lilian Moore. New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1967.

Introduction:

Do you ever wake up in the morning and sort of pretend to be asleep? What do you hear? What do you feel?

Comprehension:

What does the poet mean by "sun-fingers on my cheek"?

Language

Objective:

The following activity can be used to help the student

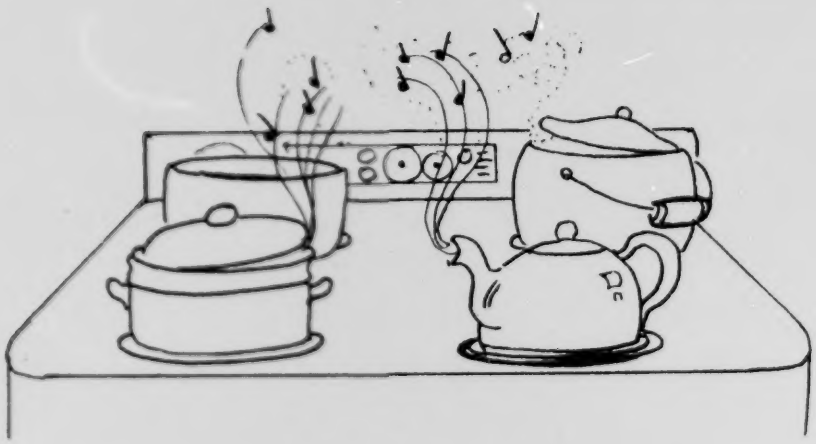
to discover that there are different ways to say the same thing and that they already know how to do this;

to become aware of the figurative use of language.

Activity:

Talk about what sun-fingers are. Have students try to say the same thing another way. ("Sunbeams" or "sunrays like fingers" or "fingers of the sun")

"Kitchen Tunes" by Ida M. Pardue. From
For A Child: Great Poems Old and New,
collected by Wilma McFarland. Philadelphia:
Westminster Press, 1947.



Introduction: (For use if you do not plan to use the drama activity. Otherwise, use the introductory part in the drama section.)

What sorts of sounds do you hear in your kitchen? Do different foods cooking make different noises? Name some of them and tell how they sound when they are cooking.

Drama

Objectives:

These activities help children

focus on the sense of hearing;

use body movement to express thought.

Introduce:

Do you ever hear any sounds coming from the kitchen that let you know your mother is fixing something to eat? What sounds do you hear?

Someone wrote a poem about some of the sounds in her kitchen. Listen to see if you have heard some of these sounds in your kitchen. (Read poem.)

Plan:

Have you ever heard "Burble! Bup" before? Sometimes when water is boiling and bubbling, it makes that sound, doesn't it? Boiling water is fun to watch, if you don't get too close to it. How does the water move? (There is constant motion, up, down, under, around.)

Act:

For just a minute pretend you are a pan of cold water that your mother has put on the stove. She wants the water to boil before she adds the carrots to it. Get into position--you are a pan of cold water. Now, you are beginning to feel warmer, and warmer. Now you're hot and you begin to boil--gently, at first, and then as you get hotter, you boil faster and faster. Let's hear the sounds you make, too.

Now your mother takes you off the stove and you stop boiling and just sit there, steaming.

Plan and Act:

What are some other sounds you hear in your kitchen? (Discuss various sounds and let them try making the sounds. Possibilities include toasters, dishwashers, garbage disposals, electric mixers, egg beaters, coffee percolators, oven timers, etc.)

All of the things we have mentioned make a sound and they move in some way too. (Discuss some examples. For instance, what moves in a dishwasher, an egg beater, a toaster?) Think of one thing in your kitchen that makes a sound. (Allow a minute for thought.) Change yourself into that thing now and at my signal begin moving and making the sound of whatever it is you are. Our room will be just like a big kitchen with everything working at once.

(After they have played for a moment, suggest that something has gone wrong with their motors and they begin to work faster and faster. Then they start to slow down--slower, slower, slower until they stop.)

Conclude:

(Ask them what kinds of kitchen things they were and what they were doing--like mixing a chocolate cake or beating eggs. Suggest that they pay close attention the next time their mothers are in the kitchen and listen to all the sounds.)

Composition

Objectives:

The activity encourages students to

- be keen observers;
- explore the many ways things we observe can be described through the use of adjectives.

Activities:

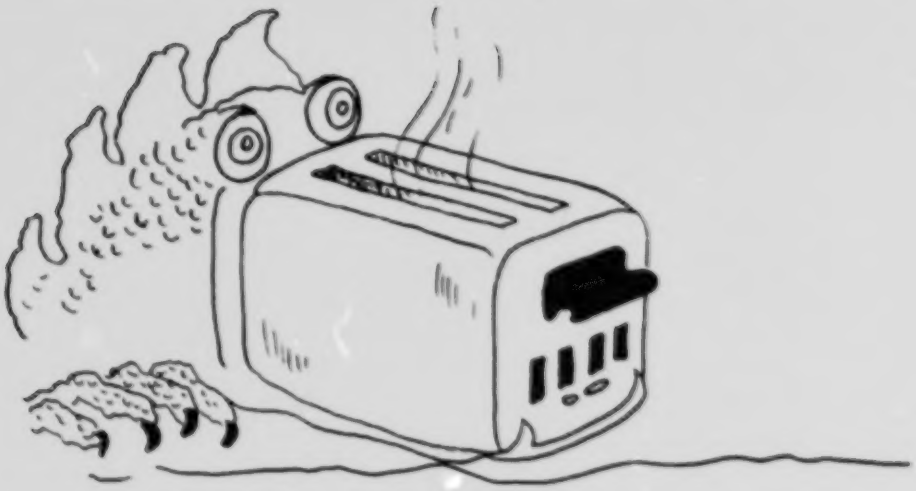
When mother is cooking in the kitchen it's not only a noisy place but it's also a smelly place. Think about the good smells in your kitchen. Tell about them and describe them so that others will know just what each smell is like.

Which smell do you like best? Why?

Together, write a poem about kitchen smells. Begin with:

Our kitchen is a smelly place

and then tell about all the good smells.



"The Toaster" from Laughing Time by William Jay Smith. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Introduction:

Is there a toaster in your kitchen? Suppose it were an animal. What kind do you think it might be?

Comprehension:

What animal does the toaster look like in the poem? Do you think a toaster is like a dragon? Why or why not?

Composition

Objective:

The following composition activities

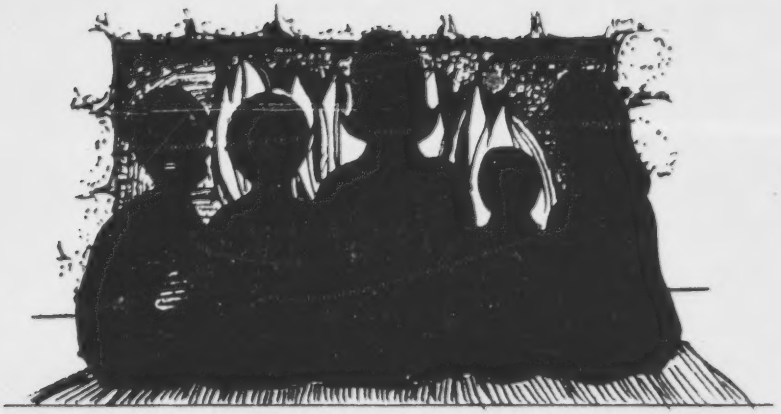
introduce students to the concept of describing one thing in terms of another (metaphor, simile).

Activities:

1. Make a list on the blackboard of household objects. Have the students describe the objects in terms of an animal.

2. Have students think of something within their homes that reminds them of an animal. Have each student describe this object without telling what it is. Have the class guess what the object is.

"The Song of the Cornpopper" from Tirra Lirra by Laura E. Richards. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.



Introduction: (For use if you do not plan to use the drama activity. Otherwise, use the introductory part in the drama section.)

1. Many children will not remember the old-style cornpopper that was held over a fire; you may have to explain.

2. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) topaz - a yellow gem.

Drama

Objectives:

The suggested activities should help the students

to experiment with vocal sounds;

to use body movement to express thought;

to focus on the sense of taste.

Introduce:

(Let the children experiment with the opening line of the poem, before they know what the sounds represent. They will enjoy making the sounds. If you want to, you could conduct them as you would an orchestra, starting off slowly with an occasional Pip! and building it so they come fast and furiously, then slowing down again.

Say the first and second lines for them and ask them what they think makes the sound of "Pip! Pop! flippety flop!" Accept all their responses and if they don't mention corn popping, tell them you will read some more of the poem and as soon as they think they know what it is talking about, they are to raise their hands. (You might want to omit the third verse at this point, since cornpopping over hot coals is not something they are likely to know about.)

Plan:

Before they pop, how do the kernels of corn move? (They shake back and forth when the popper is shaken.) And before they pop, they begin to swell. What does "swell" mean?

Act:

Let's try it! Some of you can be the people who are popping the corn. The rest will be the corn. (Let them get into position.) Corn, first you are dropped in the pan. You're all hard and yellow and small; I must say, you don't look good at all! The top is put on the pan, and you are put over the heat. I'll say part of the poem while you do the action. (Begin with the fourth verse, using the word "them" instead of "me" in that verse. Continue with the rest of the poem.)

(They may want to repeat the playing more than once, reversing the roles.)

Conclude:

Now, let's all imagine we are sitting in front of the nice warm fire and we each have a big bowl of popcorn in front of us. My, it tastes good! Add some salt and butter if you like. Maybe someone could pour us some hot chocolate too. Smell the popcorn!

When you are finished, put the popcorn away if there is any left. Wash the cornpopper and your hands and face. And sit down.

Language

Objectives:

Any of the following activities could be used when appropriate to help students

to discover that there are different ways to say the same thing and that the child already knows how to do it;

to become aware of "sounds" in language and to develop interest and enjoyment in these sounds.

Activities:

1. Ask students to listen for words that sound like the noises they name. (pip, pop) Ask them to think of other words that sound like noises. (crash, squeak, bang, splash. . .)

2. As you read the poem you could ask students to listen for rhyming words. Put some of them on the board. Let them add the rhyming words to their book of rhymes.

3. In stanza three, ask what words tell us what the glow looked like (fiery, and especially topaz yellow and ruby red.) Talk about, or induce, the fact that topaz yellow means "yellow like topaz." Have students think of some other combinations of words of the same kind. For example, ask for another way of saying "white like milk (milk white); blue like the sky (sky blue); green like an emerald (emerald green); green like grass (grass green). Or give them some of the compounds, such as snow white, and ask what each means. (white like snow)

Composition

Objectives:

The suggested activities help the students

to use imagination to become something other than themselves (in this case, a kernel of popcorn);

to understand that their words create for others an imagined experience.

Activities:

1. Ask students to imagine that while the corn was popping one kernel popped right out of the pan and onto the floor. When it hit the floor it suddenly grew bigger--as big as a playground ball. It rolled round and round the room and then rolled right out the door. Where might it go? What adventures might it have? What might happen to it?

2. Ask students what they call the kernels of corn that are left in the bottom of the popper--the ones that don't pop. If one of those kernels could talk what do you think it might say? How would it feel to still be a hard, dry kernel when all the other kernels in the popper had turned into light, bouncy bits of fluff?

Then ask students to think of some kind of magic that would make an unpopped kernel lovelier than any of the other kernels: What would be better than an ordinary piece of popped corn? Who or what could make the right kind of magic? Tell or write a story about it.

Whistle

I want to learn to whistle,
I've always wanted to;
I fix my mouth to do it, but,
The whistle won't come through.

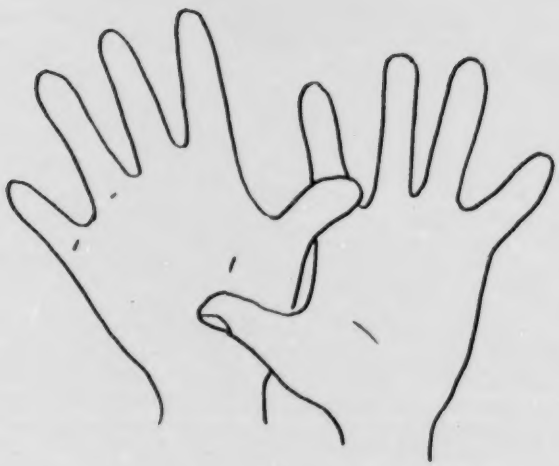
I think perhaps it's stuck, and so
I try it once again;
Can people swallow whistles?
Where is my whistle then?

--Anonymous

Introduction:

How many of you can whistle? Did you have much trouble learning to do it?

"Hands" from Everything and Anything by Dorothy Aldis. New York: G. P. Putman's Sons.



Introduction: (For use if you do not plan to use the drama activity. Otherwise, use the introductory part in the drama section.)

1. Take a look at your hands. They can do lots of things, can't they? What are some of the things hands can do?

2. Where do peas come from? Did you ever shell a pea?

3. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) plaiting - braiding.

Drama

Objectives:

The suggested activities should help the students

to focus on one part of the body and explore the different things it can do;

to be aware of how helpful hands can be.

Activities:

(This lesson could be used early in the school year in connection with the room-helpers chart many first and second grade classes use. You might want to cut out outlines of a hand with a child's name on each one to put in the various pockets of the chart. Or, perhaps each child would like to trace his own hand on a heavy piece of construction paper and cut it out.)

Introduce:

Wiggle your hands and fingers. Wiggle one finger at a time. Open and close your hands. Now put them both on your desk and look at them. (Lead right into the poem "Hands" by Dorothy Aldis.)

Plan and Act:

What things can your hands do that your feet can't do? (As various activities are mentioned, guide the whole class to pantomime the action. For example, if a child answers that his hands can color or draw, he might respond with something like the following: "Imagine that you have a huge piece of paper in front of you. Pick up your favorite color and draw something very large to fill up the paper." Or, if a child says his hands can catch a ball: "Pick out a ball. Decide whether it's small or large. Throw it up in the air and catch it a few times. Can you play catch with the person next to you?"

After a few examples are given and pantomimed by the whole class, you might ask them not to say out loud what their hands can do, but when someone has an idea, he can show what the idea is by acting it out. If you wish you might direct them to focus their ideas on things their hands can do to help someone else. You might do a simple hand pantomime yourself to give them a start.)

Conclude:

Your hands have been so busy. The time has come to give them a rest. Put them in your lap and let them rest very still for a minute. While they are resting, look at them and think of the many important things hands can do.

Language

Objectives:

Any of the following activities can be used to help the students

to discover that language enables us to tell how things are done;

to discover that words sometimes have several forms.

Activities:

1. In stanza 3, ask students to find a word that tells how to hold things. In stanza 5, ask them to find a word that tells how the hands began.

2. Have students think of other things hands can do and have them complete the following:

There are things hands do that feet never

can, like. . . or like. . . .

You might want to write all the things they think of on the board, using the -ing form of the verb. Then have them say each in a different form; using the modal can: (Hands can plait. . . , or shell. . . ; or string. . . .).

"Feet" from Everything and Anything by Dorothy Aldis. New York: G. P. Putman's Sons.

Introduction: (For use if you do not plan to use the drama activity. Otherwise, use the introductory part in the drama section.)

1. You've heard the poem about hands. What about feet? Can you think of anything feet can do that hands can't?

2. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) dabble - to wet by splashing or by little dips or strokes.

Drama

Objectives:

The following activities encourage the students

to focus on one part of the body and explore the different things it can do;

to focus on the sense of touch, as related specifically to feet.

Introduce:

(Ask the children to remove their shoes.) Wiggle your feet and toes. Stretch them, curl them, stretch them again. What can you do because you have feet? (Guide the children to try out ideas as they are suggested. For example, stand, walk, run, skip, etc. If space is limited, maybe one row at a time could try out a particular idea, another row could try out the next idea, etc.) Sit down and relax.

Present poem:

(Say the first verse of "Feet" by Dorothy Aldis.) Can you think of a time when you ran so fast your feet pounded? (Discuss briefly.)

(Say the second verse.) Let's think about how bare feet feel when you walk on grass. Imagine it is a nice summer day and you are walking on grass. (Act it out.) How do your feet feel? Sit down right where you are. I'm going to tell you something else feet like to feel. (Say third verse. Act it out, talking about how the feet feel in the water. While they are dabbling their feet in the water, say the rest of the poem.)

Plan and Act:

What do your feet like to feel? What do they have fun doing? (Guide them to act out some of their ideas. Possibilities include walking through sand, wading in water, running through the sprinkler, peddling a bike, dancing, ice-skating, jumping on a trampoline, jumping rope, etc. If someone suggests walking in mud, you might respond with the poem, "I Know A Place" by Myra Cohn Livingston, and guide play by suggesting that they imagine it has just rained and there is a lot of wonderful mud around. "Let's see what you think is most fun to do when there is a lot of mud." Then allow time for play.)

Is there anything your feet do not like to feel? (Guide them to act out ideas.)

Conclude:

(The children pantomime while you side-coach.) Let's take our poor, tired feet inside. Get a bucket and fill it with nice warm water. Put your feet in the bucket. My, that feels good on your feet--warm and soothing. Now get a big towel and dry your feet--in between each toe, too. Put on your socks. And your shoes.

Language

Objectives:

The following activities can be used

> to focus attention on the meaning of words and the sounds of language, and to develop interest and enjoyment in unusual words and in sounds.

Activities:

1. As you read the poem have students listen for words that rhyme. If you read it a second time, stop just before the second word in a rhyme and let students supply it. List some of the rhyming words on the board. Ask if they sound alike at the beginning or the end of the word. If students are making a book of rhymes, let them add the words.

2. Talk about meaning of "dabbling" and "slip-sliddering." Ask if students ever heard the words before; if they like them, and what they think they mean; if they can find another word inside "sliddering;" if they think it a good way to describe how water feels when you dabble your toes in it.

Point out that it is a word probably made up especially for this poem. Ask if they can think of some words that tell how water feels to them.

3. Ask students to think of some other things the feet can feel that the hands never will.

Selection:

"Independence" by A. A. Milne, reprinted in When We Were Very Young. New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., page 17.

"Roads" from Poems by Rachel Field. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957.

MAINE
TREASURE
HOME
MEXICO

Introduction:

1. Have you ever wondered where a road was going?

2. Where have some roads led you?

3. What did you do when you got to the end of the road?

4. This is a poem about roads that might lead to anywhere.

5. Vocabulary: milliner - someone who makes women's hats;
quay - a landing place beside a waterway used by ships.

Language

Objectives:

The suggested activities could be used to help the students

discover that language enables us to say "to where" something leads and to do many other things.

Activities:

1. Ask students to find all the groups of words that tell "to where" the road leads.

2. Have students think of some other groups of words that might tell "to where." Use the following frame and see how many ways the class can complete it.

A road might lead to _____.

3. Ask what "blue-humped" means. What is humped? Why blue? Have students think of some other colors a mountain might be against the sky.

4. Ask how we would have to pronounce "again" to make it rhyme with "Maine." Ask if students have ever heard anyone pronounce it in this way (in some dialects it is pronounced to rhyme with Maine).

Composition

Objectives:

The suggested activities encourage students to

develop the ability to use oral language with others through imaginary play acting.

Materials:

Colored paper, string, clay, small boxes for houses

Suggested Questions:

1. If a road led to a witch's pointed house, what would you say when you arrived at the house? What would the witch say? (You might want to have an imaginary witch's house and select a student to be the witch. Another student could walk down the road. Have the students take a few minutes to act out the roles.)

2. What would you do if your road led you to a place where there were hats for every head?

3. Close your eyes and imagine that you are on a road. This road can lead you anywhere you want to go. What would be at the end of your road? What would you do when you arrived? What would you talk about if someone came to see you?

Student-Teacher Planning:

1. List some of the places on the board.

2. Decide on four different roads with appropriate surroundings (forests, meadows, mountains, etc.).

3. Plan a bulletin board or table scene with roads leading into the surroundings.

4. Discuss with students how they could construct or draw what will be at the end of their road.

Activities:

1. Each student make his own drawing or own construction to be used at the end of the road of their choice.

2. Some students plan and construct the roads. Others can make trees, fields, etc. If the table top is used place the trees in a small piece of clay so that they will stand.

3. Take turns putting their own drawings on the bulletin board or their own construction on the table and have another student take a trip down the road. Have the students act out what they would say to each other and what they would do.

Variations:

1. Free time activity for three or four students.

2. They might talk about what they would do if they found themselves in a different house on a different road. For example--the witch might find herself living in the house with many hats, or the tailor might find himself living in the cave.

3. Each student could make a road sign that would lead to the end of the road. Other students would read the road signs before they arrived.

"Skyscrapers" from Poems by Rachel Field.
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957.

Introduction:

Sometimes poets look at something that is not alive and pretend that if it were alive it would have feelings and thoughts just like you and I.

Comprehension:

Have you ever thought of a skyscraper as lonely?

How do you think one of the following things would feel? What would it tell you about its thoughts if it could talk?

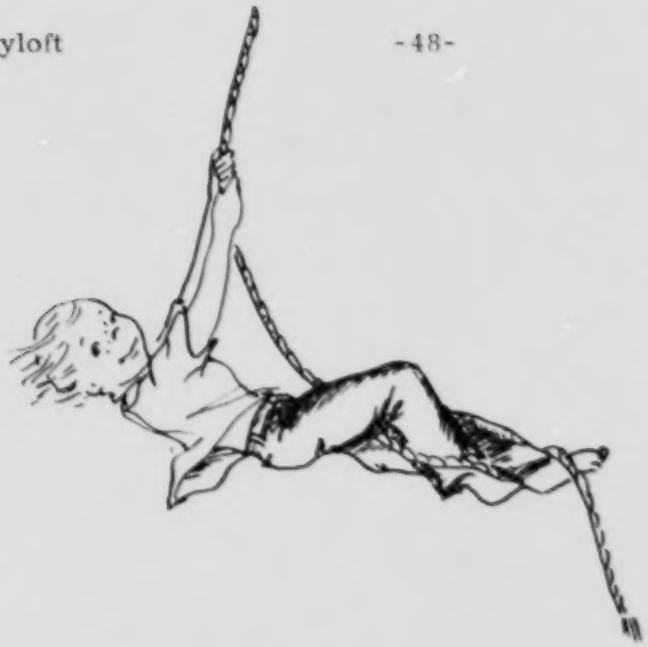
--the last Christmas tree on the sale lot
--a deserted house with broken windows
--a large, old barn in the middle of a field
--a park bench

Can you tell us about things you think would have feelings and thoughts if only they could talk.

The Hayloft

The hayloft is my favorite place to go.
Mother doesn't climb the ladder, "Too
high," she says,
And Father goes there just for work,
to toss down hay.
He doesn't stay like I do.

Sometimes it's good to be alone.



There's a rope that swings up and away
Above hay and cows and gazing cats
And then back again.
Or for quieter times
There are bale chairs and tables,
Afternoon tea with brown bread and
cheese and cider
Brought from the house.

And the barn cats who talk of mice
And cows' milk squirted warm in wide
pink mouths
Purr around my ankles
Push up against my hand with hunched
backs.

If I had been crying,
My tears would stop.

--Susan Bennett

Introduction:

1. Do you have a favorite place to go?

2. Can you imagine a place you would like to have to be alone in?

3. What would you take for a picnic?

4. What does the place smell like? Are there special sounds? Have you swung like this little girl on a rope? What does your stomach feel like?

Comprehension:

1. Do you like to be alone in your special place like the child in this poem?

2. Do you think this special place belongs to a little boy or a little girl?

3. Have you ever swung on a rope? What does it feel like?

Language

The If - Then language game could be used in conjunction with this poem.

They're building a mound

They're building a mound,
they're making a hump;
they call it the city garbage
dump.

It started one day
as a great big hole.
Then they filled up that
big dust bowl.

It reached the top
and went right by--
into the sky a mile high.

What I'd like to know,
(don't think I'm a grump),
is who's going to dump
the garbage dump.

--W. V.

Introduction:

1. Where do you put the garbage you have at home?

2. Where does the garbage go after it leaves your house?

Comprehension:

1. Have you ever been to a garbage dump? Does it look like the dump described in this poem?

2. Can you answer the poet's question, "Who's going to dump the garbage dump?" What are some ways you can make use of things instead of throwing them away?

"I Know a Place" from Whispers and Other Poems by Myra Cohn Livingston. New York: Harcourt Brace and World.

Introduction:

If you took "sloppy" and "oozy" and put them together, what word would you get? What do you think such a word would describe?

Language

Objectives:

The following activities could be used

to help students become aware of sounds of language and to develop interest and enjoyment in sounds;

as a takeoff point for talking about making up new words.

Activities:

1. As you read the poem have students listen for or find the words that sound alike (rhyme).

2. Talk about words that help us "feel" what the mud is like. Ask what they think "sloozy" means. Point out that it is a word the author probably made up just for this poem. Have them try to think of some other words that might tell how mud feels. Have them try to combine (blend) some words to make others (fog + smoke = smog).

Note: These activities could be combined with the composition activities listed below.

Composition

Objectives:

The suggested activities encourage students

to listen to and enjoy the rhythm and sound of language;

to explore the variety of words that can describe one experience.

Activity:

Call attention to the poet's use of "oozy" and "sloozy" to describe mud. Have students explore other words that could be used to vividly describe

experiences in mud. Encourage them to think of a variety of interesting words; they may even coin some new words.

Think about walking on a sidewalk and then think about walking in mud. Is it easier or harder to walk in mud? Why?
How would you describe walking in mud?
How does it feel? (either barefooted or shod)
What sounds do your feet make when you walk in mud?

List students' words on the board. When a number of interesting words have been suggested, read through the list and ask students which words they could put together to make a chant for walking in mud. An example might be:

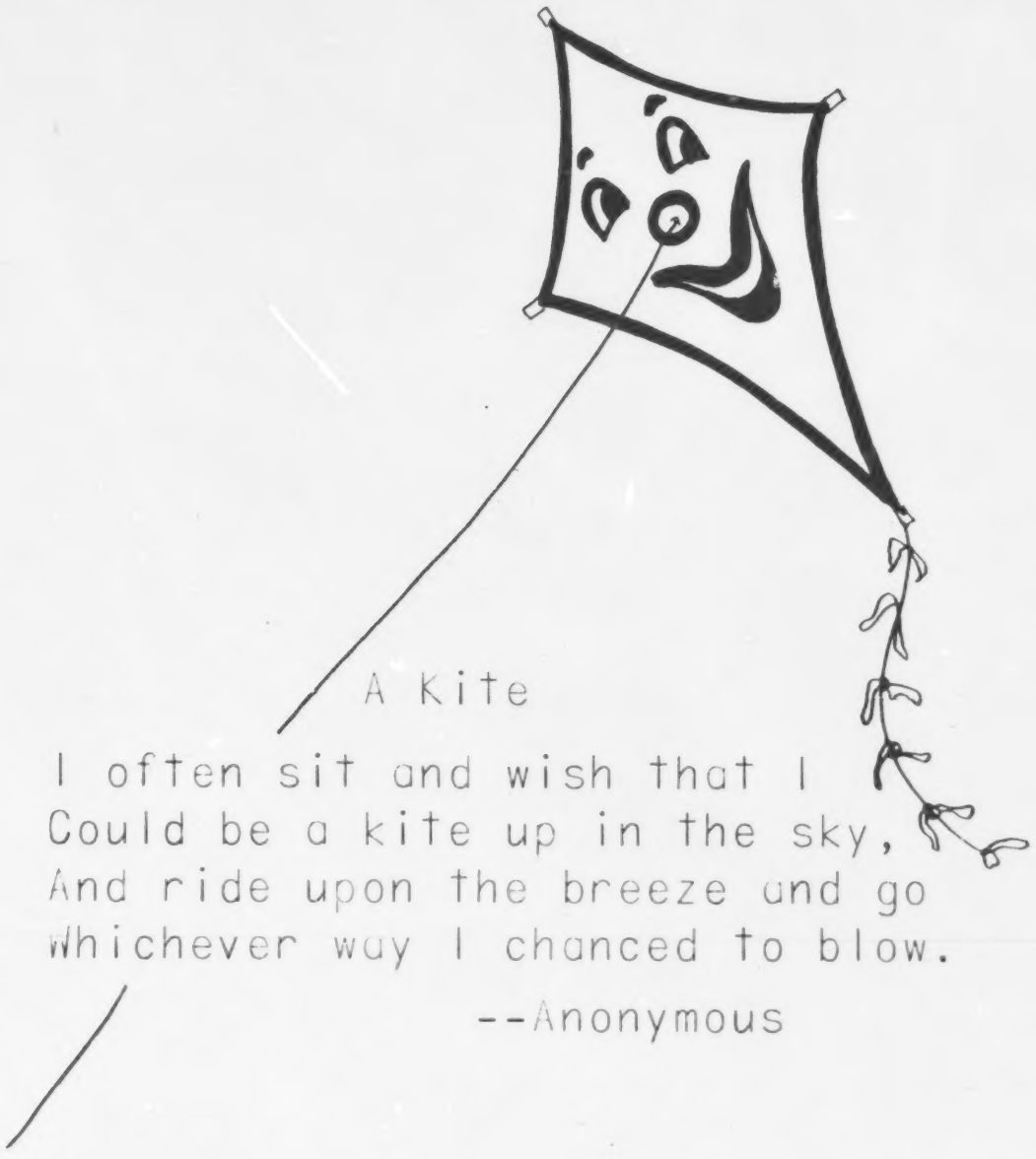
Boots, mud, squish, splash
Water, run, water, jump
Mud, fun, walk, run
Race, splash, wet, dash
All fall down!

Perhaps the class can make up several chants. Then small groups can take turns pantomiming walking in mud while the rest of the class accompanies them with a chant.

"Barefoot Days" from Taxis and Toadstools by Rachel Field. Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1926.

Comprehension:

What does it mean to say that a rose has a butterfly to wear?



A Kite

I often sit and wish that I
Could be a kite up in the sky,
And ride upon the breeze and go
Whichever way I chanced to blow.

--Anonymous

Introduction:

Have you ever wanted to fly? How do you think it would feel to be a kite?

Language

Objective:

The following activities could be used to help students

use a particular sentence structure.

Activity:

1. For first graders, ask what things they wish that they could do. Perhaps you could put on the board "I wish that I could be a _____" and have students take turns completing it orally. You could write down for them what they say. Have each of them begin with "I wish that. . . ."

You could ask second graders to write a composition or their own poem beginning with "I wish that I could be a . . . ."

Composition

Objectives:

This activity should encourage students to

verbalize sensory impressions;

think imaginatively.

Activity:

Ask students if they have ever run with a strong wind at their backs and felt almost as if they were flying?

How did it make you feel?
What did you think about as you flew along?

Then ask students to imagine what it would be like to ride on a big kite high up in the sky, or to have smaller kites attached to each arm and to fly about in the wind like a bird.

How would you feel as you rose upward from the ground?
How would the earth look down below you?
Where would you want the wind to take you?
How would you get safely back home?

Tell about your adventure.

"Mine" from I Feel the Same Way
by Lilian Moore. New York: Atheneum
Publishers, 1967.

Introduction: (For use if you do not plan to use the drama activity. Otherwise, use the introductory part in the drama section.)

Have you ever built a sand castle at the beach? Have you ever dug sand tunnels? What happened to them? If your sand castle is at war with the ocean, who always wins?

Drama

Objectives:

The suggested activities should encourage the students

to focus on the sense of touch;

to use body movement to express thought and character.

Activities:

Introduce through sensory awareness. (Bring a bag, or several bags, with fine sand in it. Each child closes his eyes and feels the sand.)

What do you suppose it is? It could be sugar or salt or sand or. . . ?

It could be any one of those things. I'll give you a clue as to which one it is: You probably like to play in it. Where do you suppose the sand came from?

What do you like to do in the sand when you go to the beach? (Discuss ideas.)

Imagine that we are all at the beach right now. The sand is nice and warm. Do one of the things you like especially to do in the sand.

(After a minute or two of playing.) Some of you were building things in the sand. Let's see what interesting things all of you can make from the sand. Maybe some of you will want to work together to make something. (Allow time for play. Then maybe some will want to tell others what they have made.)

Do sand castles (forts, or whatever else they have made) last long? What happens to them? Accept all answers--someone steps on them, or kicks them, or a dog runs over them, or the water comes in, etc.)

Listen to this little poem: (Read the first two verses.)

(Make up other verses according to other things they have made in the sand. Let them say the line, "All sand. . . belong to me--to me," each time. Ask them what kind of a voice the sea might have when it says that. You might have half the class say the first two lines and the other half respond as the sea.)

Does the sea rush in all at once and take the things made of sand, or does it creep in gently? (Of course, it could be either way. Discuss their observations, noting how the water comes in, retreats, comes in, etc.)

I wonder if some of you could be the sea coming in to get the things the children on the beach have made. (If you want to, you can use the cymbal to help establish the rhythm of coming in, going back, building each time until the sand castles are completely gone.)

What do you do when the water comes in to get your sand castles? (Some can be the children on the beach, some the sea. Those who are the sea can work individually or join hands and work together. After they have played a couple of times, they can add the words of the sea to the move - ment.)

(After they have played the children and the sea a couple of times, tell them to freeze right where they are while you tell them the last verse of the poem.)

(Read the last verse.)

Children, look--something of yours is floating away in the sea. Get it. Can you say what the poem said? All together: (My sand pail belongs to me--to ME!")

Conclusion:

(Relaxation to prepare for other activities. All children participate no matter what parts they played previously.)

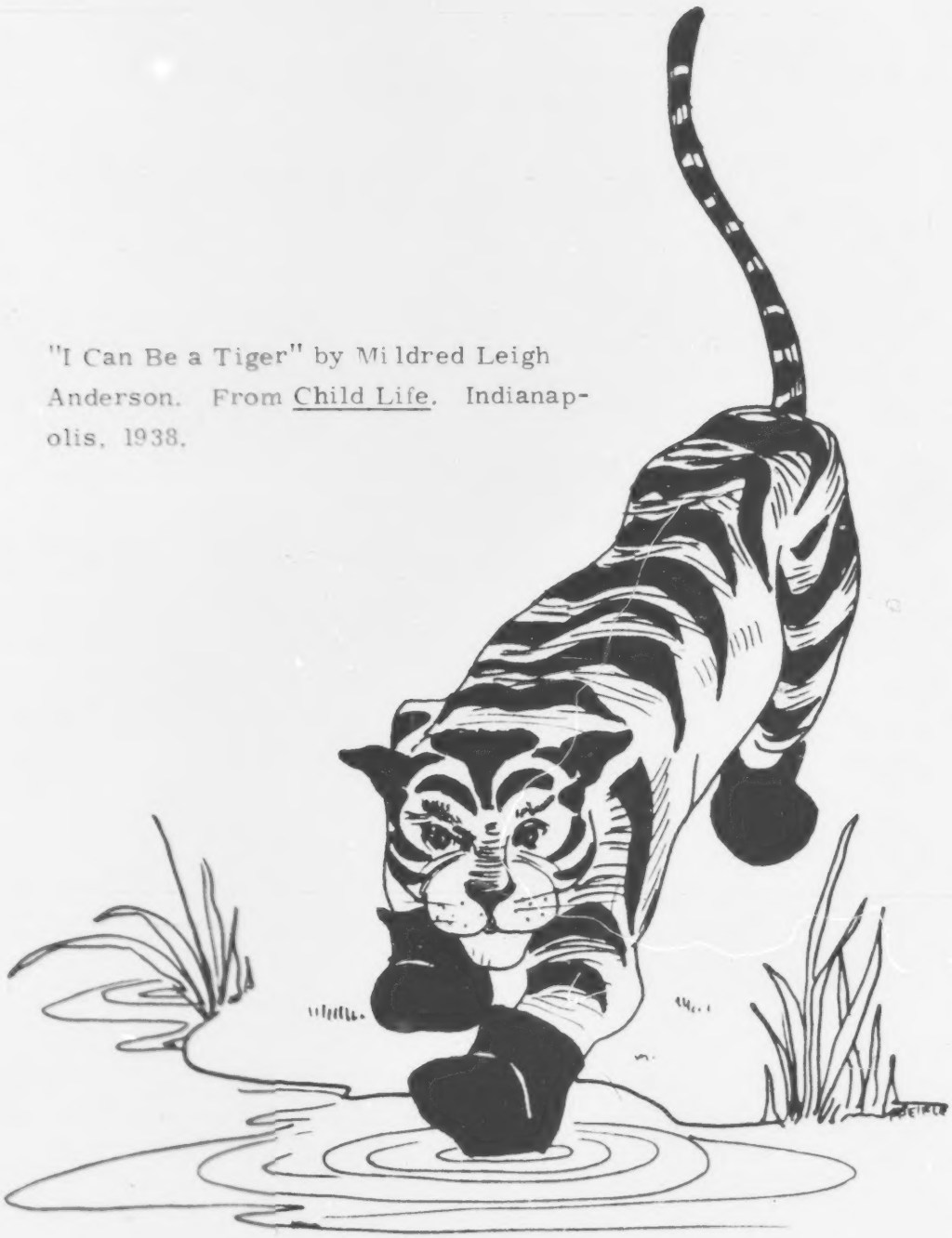
You have your pails. Gather up whatever else you took to the beach and slowly walk through the sand back to your places. Put your head down, close your eyes, and imagine that the sun is shining down on you. It feels so warm and you are so comfortable. You soon find yourself becoming drowsy and you fall asleep. (Let them "sleep" for a minute or two.)

Selection:

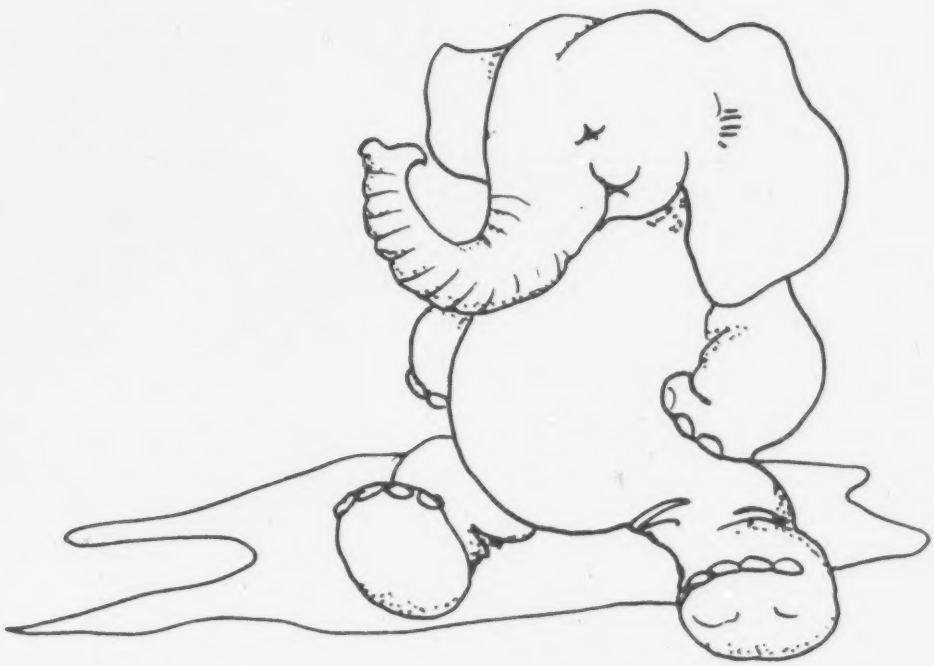
"At the Zoo" by A. A. Milne, reprinted in When We Were Very Young. New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1970, page 48.

Introduction:

Have you ever been to a zoo? Which was your favorite animal? Why?



"I Can Be a Tiger" by Mildred Leigh Anderson. From Child Life. Indianapolis, 1938.



Introduction:

Does it make you mad sometimes when your parents tell you you can't do something? Do you ever imagine that you are some kind of animal? What kind?

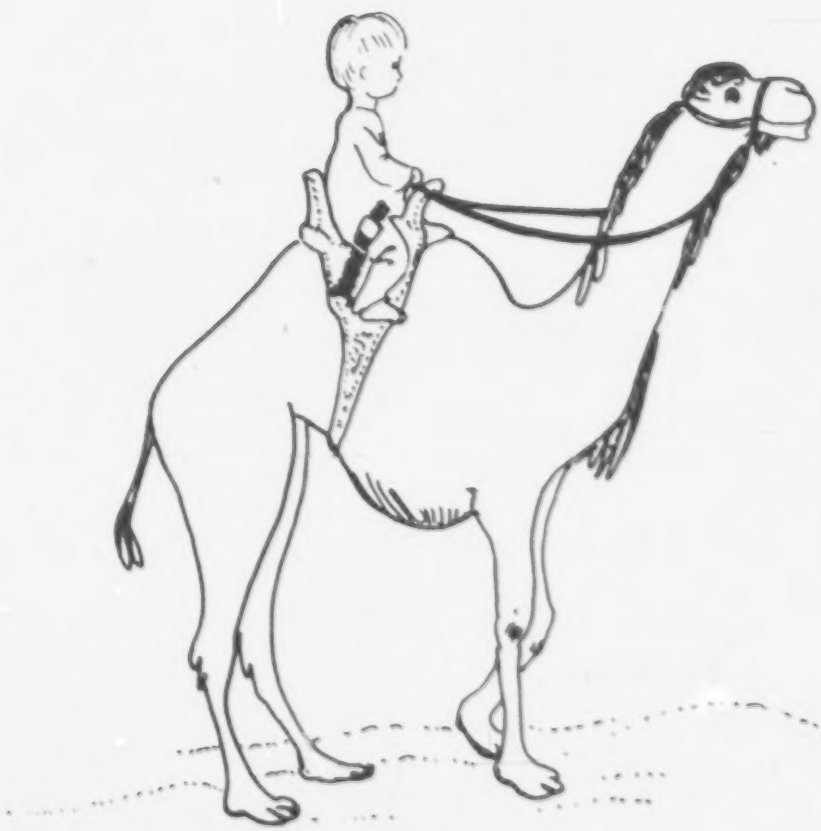
Comprehension:

How can you be a tiger or an elephant whenever you choose?

I'd ride a camel

I'd ride a camel.
I wouldn't be afraid--
if that camel
had a seatbelt made.

--W. V.



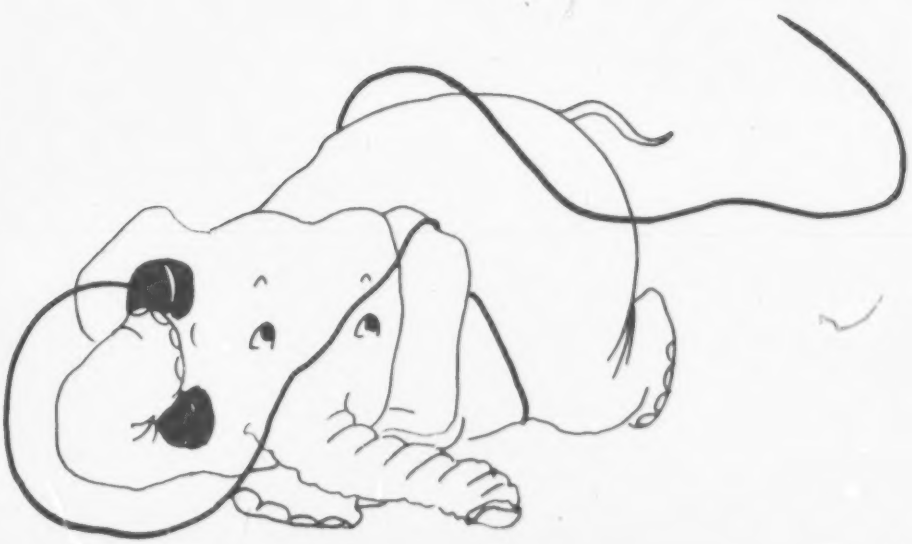
Selection:

"Furry Bear" by A. A. Milne, reprinted in Now We Are Six. New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1970, page 48.

Introduction:

When it's cold outside you have to get all wrapped up. What do you put on? Suppose you were a big furry bear--what would you have in the way of winter clothes?

"Eletelephony" from Tirra Lirra by Laura E. Richards. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.



Introduction:

To talk about language, it would be fun to have the students look at the large number of nursery rhymes that use alliteration, rhyme and combinations of these in nonsense words, like Hickety, pickety; Hickory, dickory, dock; Diddle, diddle, dumpling and others. After looking at the familiar nursery rhymes, they could look at some newer poems that use the same devices. One that plays on words and nonsense words is "Eletelephony" by Laura E. Richards.

Language

Objective:

The suggested activities should help the students

become aware that words have a history of growth and change.

Activities:

1. One way in which new words are formed is by blending: combining two words by leaving out part of each. Thus smog is a blend of smoke and fog. Some of the nonsense words in this poem are of that kind. Have students try to tell you what two words are being confused in telephant and elephone and have them identify which part comes from each.

2. Telephunk, telephee, elephop and telephong are words formed by substituting a syllable that will rhyme with a previous word for the final syllable. Thus, "telephunk" is made to rhyme with "trunk," etc. Ask students what part of the word has been changed and why.

3. Students might enjoy making some blends of their own. One way to do it is to have them think of new animals that are combinations of two other animals. For example, a lion and a tiger could produce "liger." They might enjoy drawing pictures of some new kinds of animals, half one kind and half the other, and making up names by combining the names of the animals.

Selection:

"Puppy and I" by A. A. Milne, reprinted in When We Were Very Young. New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1970, page 8.

Introduction:

Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) barley; oats.

Comprehension:

1. Where was everyone except the puppy going?
2. Where was the puppy going?
3. Why do you think the child wanted to go with the puppy?

"Chums" by Arthur Guiterman. From For A Child: Great Poems Old and New, collected by Wilma McFarland. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947.

"Little Puppy" from Navajo Indian Poems, translated by Hilda Faunce Wetherill. New York: Vantage Press, Inc.

Introduction:

1. Background on Navajo Indians: sheep-herding; rocky terrain; cornbread baked in the ashes, etc.

2. Suppose you asked your dog to go with you for the day. What would the two of you do?

3. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) fluted - grooved, one after another, giving almost a pleated effect; hogan - an earth-covered house or hut .

"The Rabbit" from Under the Tree by Elizabeth Maddox Roberts. New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1958.

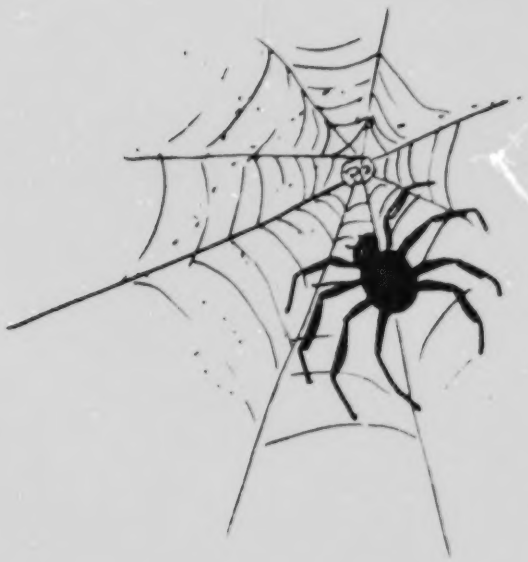
Introduction:

1. What would the rabbit say if he could talk?
2. What would you say to the rabbit?
3. Has anything similar ever happened to you?

"To a Squirrel at Kyle-Na-No" from Collected Poems of William Butler Yeats. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Comprehension:

1. Why do you think the squirrel is afraid of the man?
2. How do you think the man feels about the squirrel?



"The Secret Song" from Nibble, Nibble by Margaret Wise Brown. A Young Scott Book. Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1959.

Introduction:

Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties; Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) sea-pigeon - a small black bird with orange bill and feet; related to the duck.

Language

Objectives:

Any of the following activities can be used when they fit in to help students

discover that different parts of a sentence have different functions, and that language enables us to do many different things
--some words stand for whatever we are talking about (pronouns);

think about the way animals communicate and whether or not they talk like children.

Activities:

1. In each stanza ask who "I" is. Point out again that I always stands for whoever is speaking. In this poem it stands for the spider, the fish, the sea pigeon, the owl, and the grey fox.

2. Have students think of some other questions about who saw what.

Who saw _____?

And let them provide an answer. Have students add some stanzas to the poem (as a class, or individually.)

3. Go through the poem verse by verse and discuss the animals and what they say, with questions such as: Do spiders really talk? Can they say words? What kinds of noises do they make? (Some of those in the poem don't make any noises that we can hear or are aware of.)

As each animal is discussed, you could show a picture if you have it. Help the students realize that although animals do communicate with each other and with human beings on certain occasions, they do not use words and language as we know it. If the students mention parrots or parakeets who do repeat words, try to help them understand that this is imitation without understanding. The bird does not comprehend what he is saying, nor can he put together new sentences.

4. This poem could be used in conjunction with the language game "What Sounds Do They Make?"

Composition

Objectives:

The activities encourage the students

to imagine themselves in a non-human world, and to describe the world from the animal's point of view.

Activity:

Help the students see the secret pictures described in each verse of the poem. Ask, "Where was the spider when he saw the rose petals fall? What colors are in a sunset? How could a fish see a bird? What color is fog? etc."

Have each student choose one verse to illustrate. When pictures are finished ask students to imagine what the animal he drew might have thought when he saw the secret thing. (What do you think the spider thought when he saw the petals drop from the rose? What do you think the fish thought when he saw the colors of the sunset flash on the bird? etc.) Have each student write what the animal might have thought as a caption for his picture.

"Go Wind" from I Feel the Same Way by Lilian Moore. New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1967.

Introduction: (For use if you do not plan to use the drama activity. Otherwise, use the introductory part in the drama section.)

1. Have you ever run with a strong wind at your back and felt almost as if you were flying? How did it make you feel? What did you think about as you flew along?

2. Imagine what it would be like to ride on a big kite high up in the sky, or to have smaller kites attached to each arm and to fly about in the wind like a bird.

How would you feel as you rose upward from the ground? How would the earth look, down below you? Where would you want the wind to take you? How would you get safely back home?

Drama

Objectives:

The suggested activities encourage the students to

use imagination coupled with clues from the poem to clearly visualize the wind;

use body movement to express their ideas;

see the relationship between cause and effect.

Introduce:

1. There are many different kinds of winds. Some are slow and gentle--just the whisper of a breeze. Some are strong and active. What kind of wind is there today? (Children describe.)

2. Listen to this poem. See if you know what kind of wind it talks about--small and gentle or big and strong. (Read poem.)

3. What kind of wind was it?

How do you know it was a big, strong wind? (They may recall words from the poem like "shake," "swing," "fling," "push.")

Plan:

Let's see if you can be the big wind, shaking things and flinging things and pushing things. Stand by your chairs. If you were going to be a big wind, would you use just your fingers or would you use all of your body?

Let's try it. Move as much of yourself as you can, but stay in your own space. I'll say the poem again and you be the wind. You may want to make some wind noises too.

Act:

(Say poem while they act out.)

Evaluate and Plan:

Winds, did you notice what things you were shaking? (They may not have noticed during the playing, but they will start to focus their thinking as they respond to the question. The object is to cause the children to visualize clearly just what they are doing.)

The poem says the wind takes things. I wonder what the wind would like to take. (Listen to a few ideas.)

This time when I say the poem, I will stop for a moment after some of the lines to give you time to really shake things and swing things and fling things.

Act:

(Read again, pausing briefly as indicated. Use your voice to help build the mood of the poem.)

Go wind, blow
Push wind, swoosh.
Shake things (pause)
take things (pause)
make things
fly. (pause)

Ring things
swing things (pause)
fling things
high. (pause)

Go wind, blow
Push things--wheee. (pause)
No, wind, no.
No, wind, no.
Not me--

Plan:

(Ask such questions as "What did your wind like to shake?" "What did you fling high?") This time let's have some of you be the things that the

wind is shaking or flinging or swinging. (Maybe the children on the outer periphery of the room could be the wind, while the children in the center could be the objects being blown. How much the wind can move will depend upon the space available. However, the children playing the wind should understand that they are not to touch the objects being blown, but to show through movement what they are doing.) Decide on one thing that would really enjoy being moved by a strong wind. When you have decided, get into the position you would be in before the wind starts.

Act:

(Read the poem again. They may want to switch roles and play it another time. Another grouping possibility is to assign one wind to three or four objects and have it circulate among them. If you have a larger area to work in, they will be able to make more interesting movement patterns.)

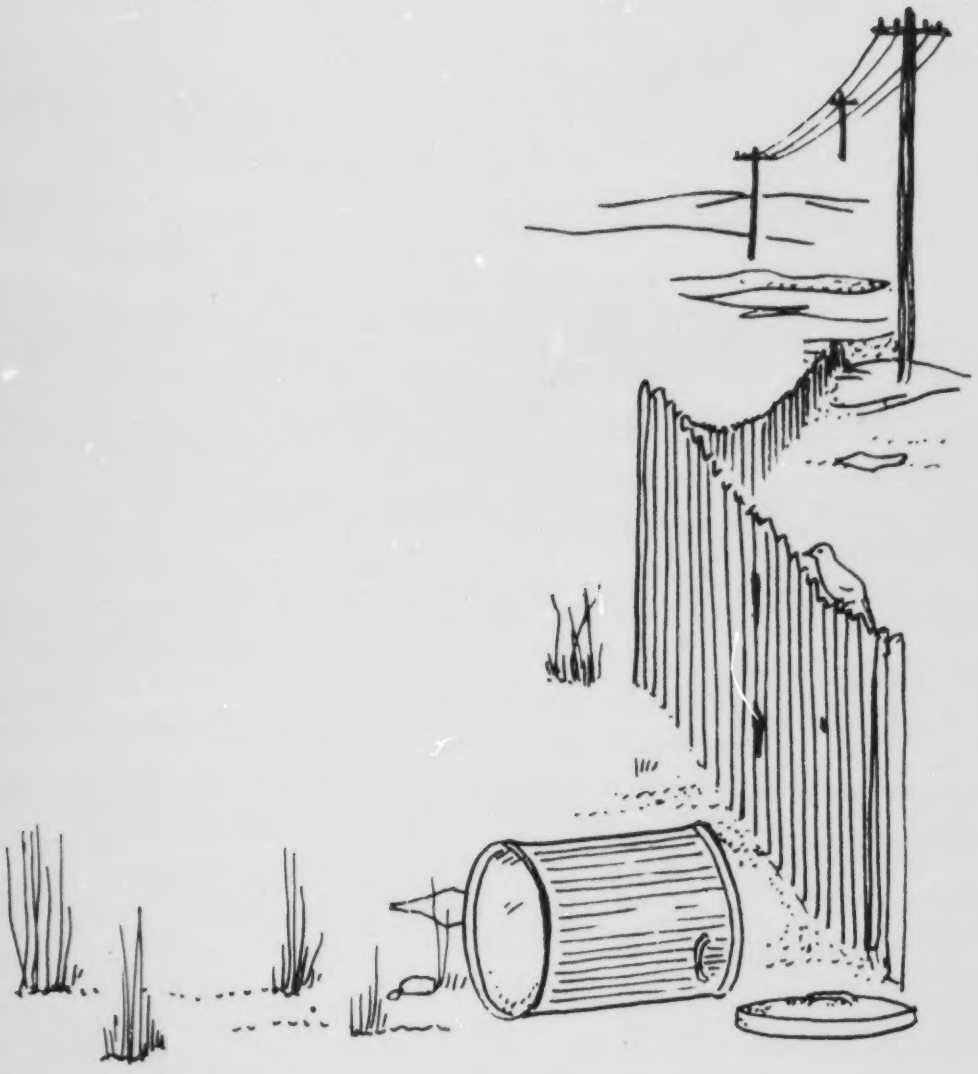
Conclude:

(Side coach so they will gradually change to calmer movement. For instance, "The wind has had such a big day. It's beginning to get tired and it isn't blowing so strongly anymore. Gradually it turns into a quiet, gentle breeze. Finally it fades away completely and everything is still and quiet."

You may want to lead a discussion about what the winds did to show their strength and what happened to the objects they were blowing. When the wind calmed down, what did the objects do?

Or, they may prefer to draw a picture about their experience. How might they show the wind in a picture? How might they show that the wind was strong? Or, perhaps they could depict the feeling and impact of a strong wind best through finger painting.)

"Wind Song" from I Feel the Same Way by Lilian Moore. New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1967.



Introduction:

Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) ashcan - your students may not be familiar with this term for garbage can.

Language

Objectives:

The following activity could be used to make students

aware of "sounds" of language and to develop interest and enjoyment in these sounds.

Activity:

Ask students to listen or find words that help us hear. Have them try to think of some other words that tell how things sound. You might want them to make a class poem by filling the blank in the following in various ways. Each child could think of something that happens when the wind blows.

When the wind blows _____.

Composition

Objectives:

The activities help the student

to explore the use of words in explaining an abstraction.

Activities:

Ask students to explain the word quiet. Elicit examples of what is quiet and write students' ideas on the board. Encourage students to use vivid descriptions or to qualify their examples: How does _____ look when it is quiet? Is it always quiet? When is it quiet? etc.

Then have students think of and demonstrate quiet body movements: Which parts of your body can you move without making a sound? What can you do quietly?

Ask students to close their eyes and try to imagine a place that is very quiet. The place is called Quietland because there is never any noise.

What would it look like?
What colors would you see in Quietland?
Would there be any animals or people there? If so, what would they look like? (If there were no sounds would the creatures have ears?)
What would they do? How would they move?

Pass out drawing paper and let students draw a picture showing their ideas of Quietland. Let them tell or write about their imaginary land.

The Wind

I saw you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass--
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid.
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all--
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,
O blower, are you young or old?
Are you a beast of field and tree,
Or just a stronger child than me?
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

--R. L. Stevenson

Introduction:

1. (Teacher: The fourth line refers to a time when women wore floor-length skirts. You may just want to ignore the explanation of the line unless a student asks about it.)

2. Can you see the wind? Have you ever wondered what wind looks like?

Comprehension:

What questions does the poet ask? Why does he ask them?

"Under the Tent of the Sky" from Songs Around a Toadstool Table by Rowena Bastin Bennett. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company.

Introduction:

1. Have you ever been to a circus? What things does the lion-tamer use? Where are circuses usually held?

2. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) Be sure your students know what all the animals mentioned in the poem look like. Bedecked - decorated, made pretty.

Comprehension:

1. What does this poem say it is like to watch a storm? Does a storm seem like this to you? Why?

2. What do you think is being described in the part about the growling lion?

Language

Objectives:

The activities help the students

to discover that different parts of a sentence have different functions and that language enables us to do many different things
--some parts tell "what kind" (i.e., they describe or modify);

to discover that there are different ways to say the same thing and that the child already knows how to do it;

to focus attention on the meaning of words and to develop interest and enjoyment in unusual words;

to discover through observation that sometimes a sound is spelled several ways;

to become aware of the regular order of words by observing deviation from the usual word order.

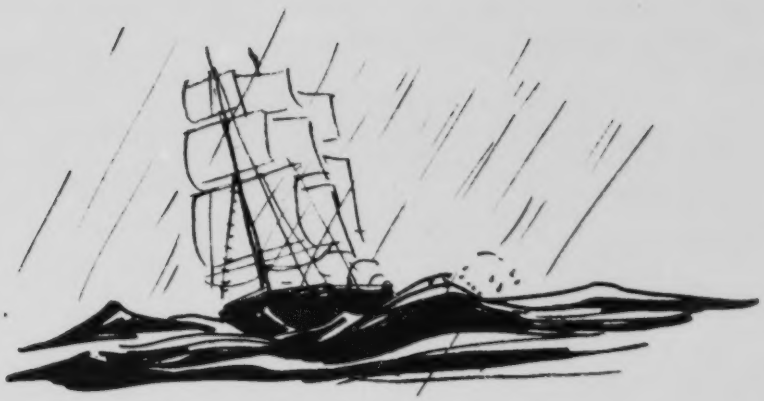
Activities:

1. This is a good poem in which to ask students to find words that tell what kind: what kind of elephants, what kind of bears, etc.

2. In "elephants, blue" and "hippopotamus, purple and puffy," "ostriches, fluffy" ask if this is the way students would usually say it. If not, ask what other ways we might say the same thing. ("Blue elephants" or "elephants are blue." "Fluffy ostriches" or "ostriches are fluffy.")

3. Talk about meaning of bedecked and also of such compound modifiers as animal-clouds, soft-footed and mud-colored (clouds like animals; colored like mud; and with soft feet.).

"It is Paining" from Another Here and Now Story Book by Lucy Sprague Mitchell. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1937.



Introduction: (For use if you do not plan to use the drama activity. Otherwise, use the introductory part in the drama section.)

1. What do you do when it is raining? Do you like to walk in the rain? Did you ever float sticks down the side of the street in the rain?

2. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) rigging - ropes used on a ship to haul sails up and down, support masts, etc.

Drama

Objective:

The activities encourage the students

to explore imaginatively the use of body movement (pantomime) in expressing thought, feelings, and action.

Introduce:

(Direct the children's attention to the rain outside and note that many of them are all ready for the rain with their slickers, boots, and umbrellas. After a brief conversation, ask the opening question of the poem "Where would you like to be in the rain? Where would you like to be?" After they have responded, you might introduce the poem to them by saying something like the following: "Some people like to be outside when it rains. Listen to this poem--maybe you would like to be in one of these places too." Then read the poem.

Plan:

Where are some places outside that you would like to be? What could you do that is lots of fun to do in the rain? (Possibilities include splashing in puddles, making dams, sailing boats, making mud pies, etc.)

Act:

Let's imagine that we are going outside in the rain. Put on whatever you want to wear in the rain. (In pantomime, of course.) Maybe some of you will put on a slicker and boots, or a bathing suit, or a sweatshirt. Put on whatever you like. When you're ready, we'll go outside and you can do one thing you would really have fun doing in the rain. (You might prefer to have half the class act out playing in the rain, while half stay inside and peer out of their windows to see what the others are doing. After a couple of minutes of playing you can ask the "Insiders" what they saw the children doing in the rain. Then reverse the roles.)

Conclude:

Everyone come inside and take off your wet clothes. Hang them up to dry. And put on some dry clothes. Look, someone has put a cup of hot chocolate on your desk! And it's just the right temperature. Taste it! Slowly drink it all up.

Language

Objective:

The following activity could be used to help students

discover that different parts of a sentence have different functions and that language enables us to do many different things.

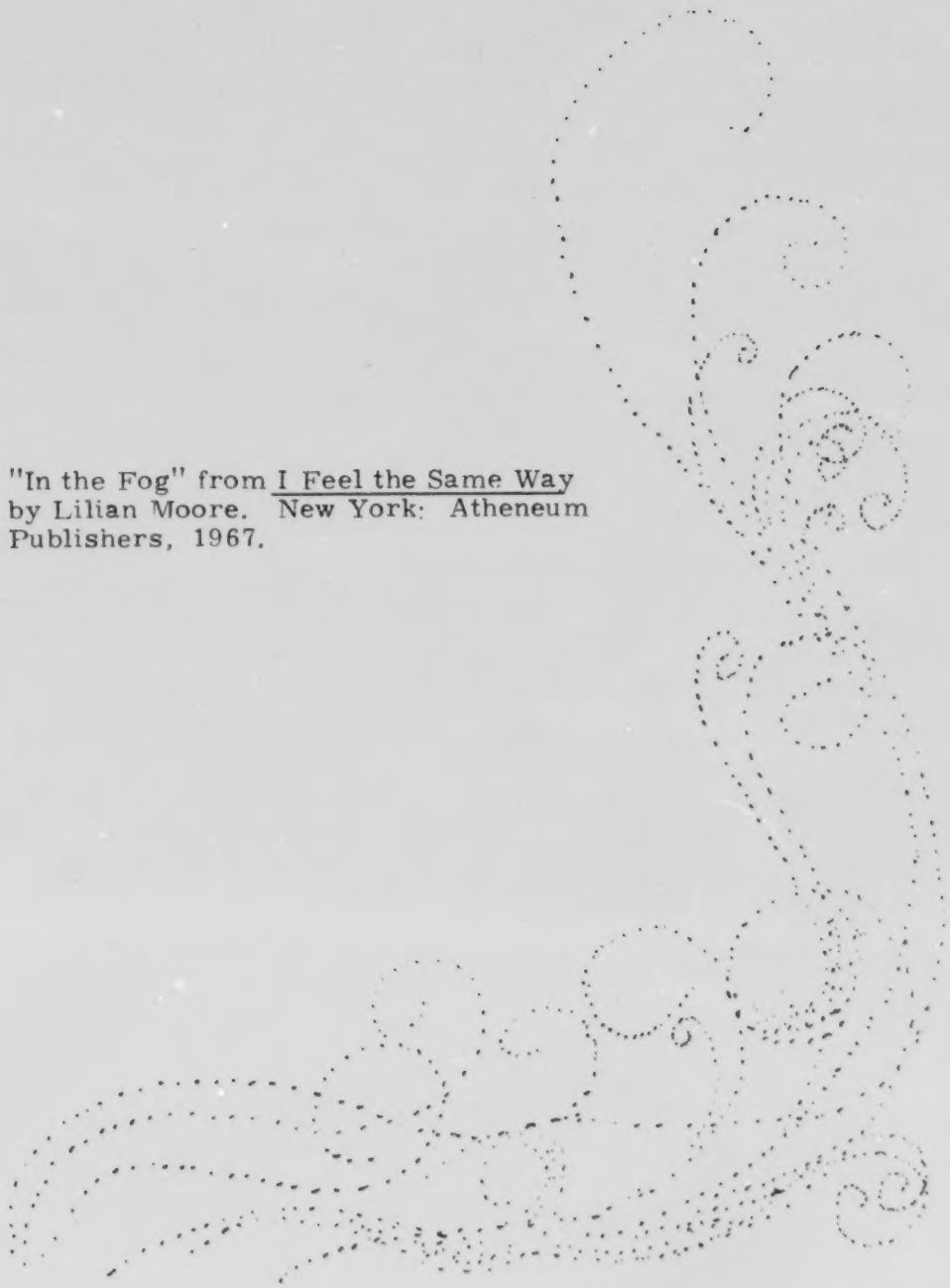
Activity:

Use this poem to find lines that tell "where." Then have students think of other ways of telling "where" by completing

I'd like to be where _____.

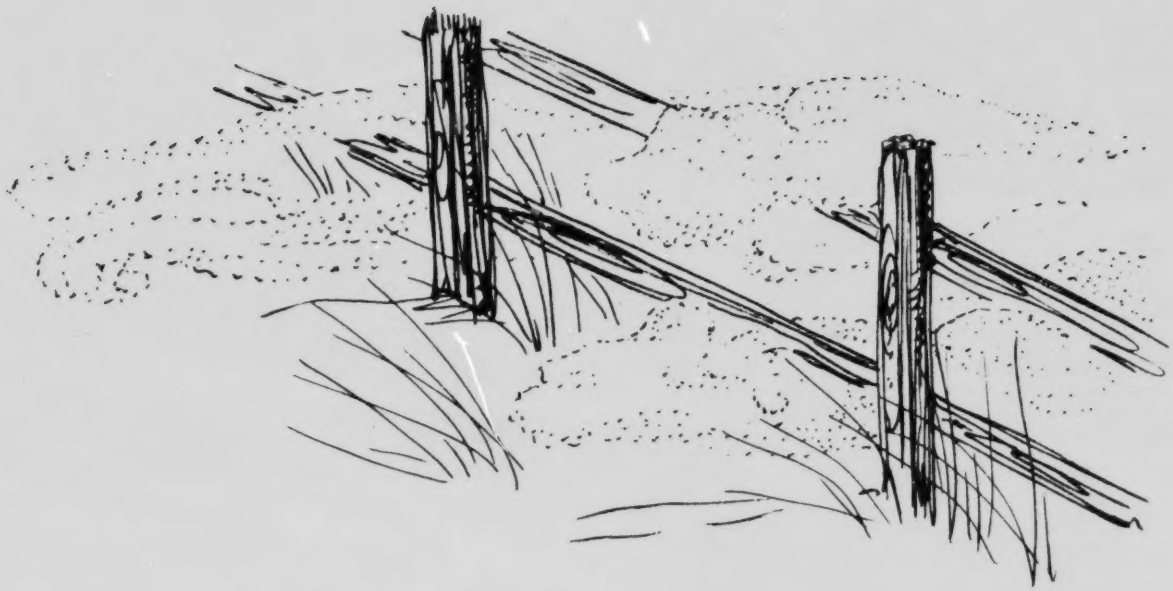
See how many different ones the class can think of.

"In the Fog" from I Feel the Same Way by Lilian Moore. New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1967.



Introduction:

What is fog like? Have you ever been in a thick fog? Have you ever seen anything disappear in the fog? What is it like walking through the fog?



Forecast

Fog rolls across the pasture
like the breath of snow
announcing it is Winter.

--Anonymous

Composition

Objectives:

This activity should encourage students to

observe accurately;

write vivid descriptions.

Activity:

Have the students plan a weather calendar or keep a daily weather chart. Each day write a comparison about the weather.

The sun _____ like _____

The rain _____ like _____ etc.

"Fog" from Chicago Poems by Carl Sandburg. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1916.

Introduction:

Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties; Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) haunches - back legs.

Comprehension:

What animal does the poem say the fog is like? Do you think fog is like a cat? Why?

Composition

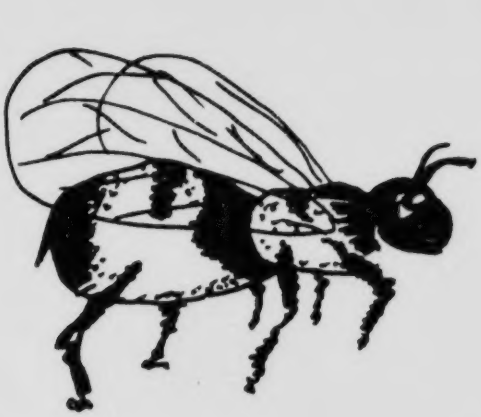
Objective:

This activity helps students to use metaphors.

Activity:

Fog reminds the poet Carl Sandburg of a cat. How do you think he might have described a sunrise--the time when the first early morning rays of light are just beginning to show? What animal do you think it is like? Why? Try to make a word picture about it.

"Bees" by Marchette Chute. From Rhymes About the Country. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1941.



Language

Objective:

The following activities can be used to

reinforce students' intuitive knowledge that various parts of the sentence have different functions.

Activities:

1. Ask who "they" is in stanza 1. Ask if "they" always stands for the same people.

2. In stanza 2, ask what words tell what kind of ground. Ask what words tell when. Have students think of some other kinds of ground. Ask what ground is like in December (cold December ground) or in March (wet March ground). They could think of such things as rocky ground; soft ground; hard ground; grassy ground, etc.

3. Point out that the first stanza tells what the author doesn't like and the second what he likes. Ask students to think of some things they like and some they don't like and then have them complete the following:

I don't like _____
But I like _____

Composition

Objectives:

The activities encourage the students

to imagine themselves in the place of an animal and to describe how the animal thinks and feels;

to relate their own experiences to the experience of the poem and realize that they too can "create" for others to listen or hear.

Activities:

Some students will have experienced a bee sting. Let them tell about getting stung:

What were you doing when the bee stung you?
What did the bee do before he stung you?
Why do you think it stung you?

Then ask students to pretend they are a bee that stings someone and have them tell their side of the story.

How do you feel? Has something made you angry? Were you hurt?
Why are you going to sting this person? What are you thinking to yourself as you near him?
How do you feel when you realize you have hurt the person? What do you feel like doing?

Stories could be tape recorded, written, or shared orally in class. Students might also enjoy making a simple bee puppet or making a small bee out of chenille to use in telling their story.

"Little Black Bug" from Another Here and Now Story Book by Lucy Sprague Mitchell. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1937.

Composition

Objectives:

The activities should encourage students

to manipulate language, discovering the sounds it makes, the things it can describe;

to discover that poems are built from words--rhyming and unrhyming--that they themselves can produce.

Activities:

Tell the students that they can make up their own verses to this poem. Have the students suggest another creature with a word that describes. List these on the board. Have a student select one from the list (mean cat). The class will say

Little mean cat
Little mean cat
Where have you been?

The student can respond with the rest of the verse, using his own imagination.

(If you have been working on words that rhyme, they might add a rhyming word to the creature listed. They would not have to rhyme, however.)

Your students might like to write some of their own verses and start their very own poetry book.

"Hey, Bug!" from I Feel the Same Way by Lilian Moore. New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1967.

Language

Objectives:

The following activities can be used to help students

discover that different parts of a sentence have different functions and that language enables us to do many different things
--some words tell how;

become aware of language used figuratively and to use it themselves.

Activities:

1. Have students find some words that tell how (very still).

2. Discuss what the "tower" and "wall" really are. Then have students think of some other things that seem different to a bug. Give them a frame such as the following to fill in:

To a bug _____ seems like _____.

Composition

Objectives:

The questions and writing assignments encourage the students

to observe the world they live in and experiment with ways to describe what they've observed;

to recognize differences and express this recognition in words;

to create an imaginative situation on the basis of their observations.

Activities:

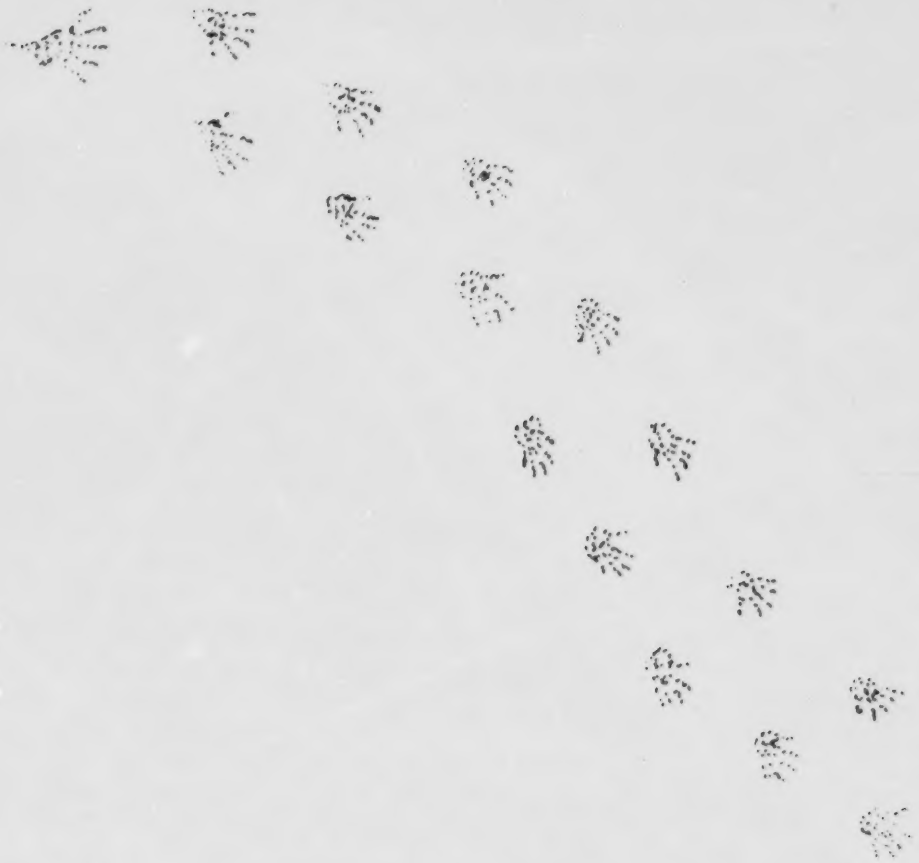
Ask students which bug they think would make the most interesting playmate. Why?

What does a (bug) do? How does it move?
How could you play with it?
What could you help it do that it couldn't do by itself?

Ask students to pretend they have a special bug playmate and to tell the class a story about it.

What would you name your bug?
How would you take your bug places with you? (on the back of your hand? in your pocket? etc.)
To whom would you show your bug?
What might that person do or say when they saw the bug?
What interesting adventures might the two of you have?

"Raccoons!" from Going Barefoot by Aileen Fisher. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., Inc., 1960.



Introduction: (For use if you do not plan to use the drama activity. Otherwise, use the introductory part in the drama section.)

1. Have you ever seen animal tracks in the snow? in the mud? What kinds of tracks have you seen? How can you tell them apart?

2. Has anyone ever seen a raccoon? What does one look like? What are a raccoon's paws like?

3. What are your favorite seasons? Why are these special times? What are some activities that you like to do in these seasons? Are there seasons you don't like as well as others. Why? What can't you do that you like to do in these seasons?

4. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) rank - thick; niches - holes; galoshes - boots, overshoes.

Comprehension:

Ask the children if they've ever felt the way the little boy or girl in this poem feels. Do they like the feel of mud between their toes? In the winter what can humans do in mud to have fun? What can hands feel that is similar to the feeling of mud between the toes? Have they noticed tracks of animals before? Can anyone draw a track on the board--a chicken, a dog, a cat, a mouse, etc?

Drama

Objectives:

The suggested activities encourage students

to explore themselves in relationship to the world around them.

Activities:

Making Tracks: This could be a bit messy but it's fun. Give each child a strip of butcher paper that is big enough to allow him to take three or four steps. Mix several flat pans of washable paint. Have each child dip his bare feet in a chosen color of paint (have several colors available) and then make tracks on his paper. Hang them around the room. Are all human feet alike?

Feet Fun: Animals do a lot with their "bare feet," can you? Have competitions to see who can pick marbles up in his feet and walk around the room. What about picking up a pencil and writing with it? Can you toss balls with your feet?

Feet Feelings: Bring in several "feelable" objects. Blindfold individual children and have them with their feet "feel." Can they guess what it is? You could bring in a piece of shag carpet, a skein of yarn, a box of dried leaves, a bottle, a tin can, several magazines, pebbles, beans, spaghetti, and so on.

Language

Objectives:

The suggested activities encourage students

to discover that different parts of a sentence have different functions and that language enables us to do many different things
--some parts tell what kind;

to discover that there are different ways to say the same thing and that the child already knows these ways;

to focus attention on the meaning of words and to develop interest and enjoyment in unusual words.

Activities:

1. There are many adjectives and compound modifiers in this poem, any of which you could use to ask students to find words that tell what kind. What kind of brook? What kind of pond? What kind of track? etc.

You might want to ask them to tell you in this form:

A wildish brook is a brook that is _____.

or ask who can say "a wildish brook" or "green-eyed pond," or "five-toed track" in a different way.

2. Ask what students think "sploshes" might be and why the author didn't say "splashes."

Composition

Objectives:

The activity encourages students

to think about everyday items (shoes, galoshes) in an imaginative way;

to describe their observations and discoveries orally.

Activities:

Ask the students to imagine all the animals with socks, shoes, and galoshes on in the winter. Discuss some problems the animals might have. Have each student make a small puppet of an animal wearing socks, shoes, and galoshes. (Paper puppets with sticks behind them will be effective.)

Two students might plan an adventure the puppets would have wearing shoes and galoshes and share it with the class.

Caterpillar

Brown and furry
Caterpillar in a hurry
Take your walk
To the shady leaf or stalk,
Or what not,
Which may be the chosen spot.
No toad spy you,
Hovering bird of prey pass by you;
Spin and die,
To live again a butterfly.

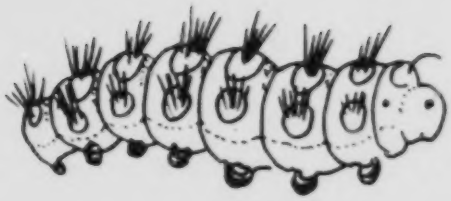
--Christina Rossetti

Introduction:

1. What do caterpillars turn into? How do they do it?

2. What animals do you think might want to eat a caterpillar? Would you?

3. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) bird of prey - a bird that kills other animals.



"Fuzzy Wuzzy, Creepy Crawly" by Lillian Schulz. From Childcraft--The How and Why Library. Vol. 1.

Drama

(If possible, use this material when there are caterpillars to observe.)

Objective:

This lesson should help children

become aware of the different methods various animals use to move.

Warm-up:

Today let's see if you can show how some different animals move. Who can show us how a rabbit moves? (Allow as many to try out the movement as want to.) How does a puppy move? A snake? (Point out the differences.)

Introduce:

There is a little tiny animal, about this big, that doesn't move like a rabbit or a puppy or a snake. Can you guess who that animal is? (Continue to give clues until they guess correctly. If you have caterpillars available, suggest that the children watch one carefully to see how it moves. They could touch one gently if they wanted to. While they are watching the caterpillar, say the poem for them.

If there aren't any caterpillars available to watch, show them a picture of a caterpillar, talk about how it moves, and say the poem for them.)

Plan and Act:

You've all watched caterpillars moving, let's see if you can move like a caterpillar. What do caterpillars spend most of their time doing? (Eating.) Let's imagine that you are caterpillars climbing up a branch to get a nice juicy leaf. Do you suppose it's hard work for a caterpillar to climb up a branch? (After they have eaten their leaves, let them stay where they are, while you continue asking questions.)

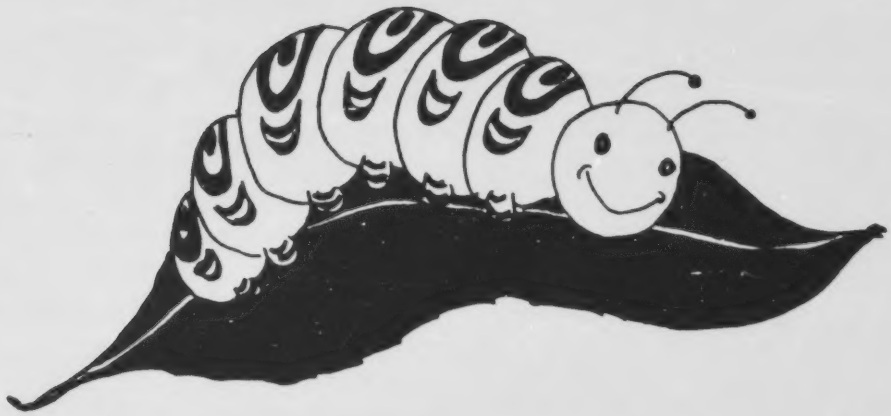
What does a caterpillar do when he has had enough to eat, before he turns into a butterfly? How does he make the cocoon? When the cocoon is finished, what does he do inside it? Let's see how each one of you spins a nice snug cocoon around yourselves.

(After the cocoons are complete.) Now you stay in your cocoon for quite a long time. While you are sleeping, something is happening to your body. Do you suppose the butterfly wants to leave the cocoon? What would

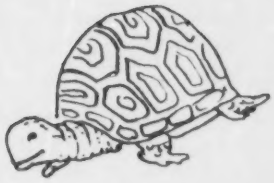
he do to get out? When he does get out, how will the world seem different to the butterfly than it did to the caterpillar? (Change of seasons, and it is flying instead of crawling.) In just a minute, I'll give you the signal to begin working your way out of your cocoon. When you are ready to fly, let's see what your butterfly will do as he explores the world for the first time.

Conclude:

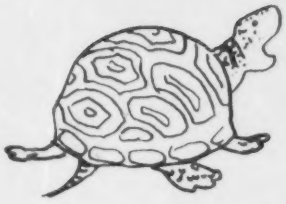
(Let them talk about what their butterflies saw. An art project could be coordinated with the material, such as making caterpillars from egg cartons, adding tissue paper wings, etc. They could learn the poem and use their caterpillars and butterflies to act it out, in the manner of puppets.)



"Only My Opinion" from Goose Grass Rhymes by Monica Shannon. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1930.

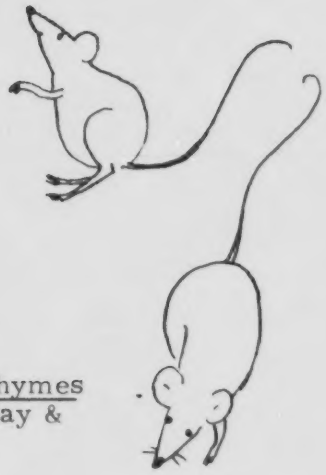


"The Little Turtle" from Collected Poems by Vachel Lindsay. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925.



Introduction:

Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) minnow.



"Mice" from Fifty-One New Nursery Rhymes by Rose Fyleman. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1932.

Composition

Objectives:

The suggested activity encourages students

to personalize the poem (relate it to each individual);

to develop the ability to use precise description;

to provide a group writing experience.

Activity:

Perhaps you could write another poem something like this one. Think of an animal that you think is especially nice and write the name of it in the blank

I think a _____
Is rather nice.

Then tell several things about your favorite animal to show why you think it is nice.

End the poem with the same lines you began it with.

(This could be a group composition.)

"Little Snail" from Summer-Day Song by Hilda Conkling.
New York: Random House, Inc. /Singer School Division.

"Regent's Park" from Gay Go Up by Rose Fyleman.
New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1929.

Introduction:

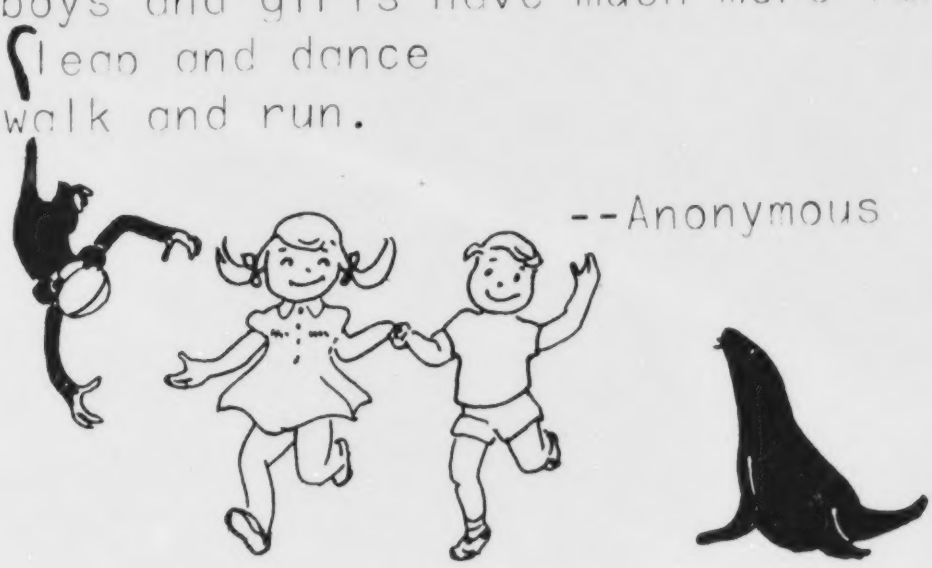
1. Have you ever noticed ducks swimming in a pond? Have you ever seen them dive? How do they do it? Do they stay under very long?

2. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties; Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) self-possessed - calm, not excited.

How Creatures Move

The lion walks on padded paws,
The squirrel leaps from limb to limb.
While flies can crawl straight up a wall,
And seals can dive and swim.
The worm, he wiggles all around,
The monkey swings by his tail,
And birds may hop upon the ground,
Or spread their wings and sail.
But boys and girls have much more fun;
They leap and dance
And walk and run.

--Anonymous



Composition

Objective:

The suggested activity encourages students

to practice using language to visualize things not present.

Introduction:

Ask the children to name their favorite zoo or circus animal. Ask them to show how the animal moves about (two or three children individually). Direct them to listen to the way the creatures in the poem move. Read the poem.

The Action:

See who can walk like a lion, or like a squirrel, flies, seals, worm, monkey, birds. Reread the poem, having a different child or children take the part of each creature and demonstrate the way it moves, while you're reading that part of the poem.

Then, have all of the children act out each creature as you read through the poem another time.

"April Rain Song" from The Dream Keeper by Langston Hughes. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1932.

Introduction:

Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties; Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) gutter, lullaby.

Drama

Objectives:

The activities encourage the students

to use imagination to identify with the raindrops;

to use body movement to express ideas.

Introduce:

How many of you have ever been kissed by the rain? (Or, how many of you were kissed by the rain when you came to school this morning?) What does that mean, being kissed by the rain? Listen to this little poem and see if you can tell whether the man who wrote it likes the rain or not. (Read all but the last line of the poem. Ask them if they think the poet likes the rain. Then tell them you're going to read it again and add the last line. They can see if they were right.)

Plan:

The rain does all sorts of nice things. It must be kind of fun to be a rain drop falling from high in the sky. If you were a rain drop, where would you like to land first? (Possibilities are numerous. A few examples include landing on the top of a playground slide, or the back of a playful puppy, on the windshield wiper of a car, on a window pane, on a church steeple, on a rose, on the ground and seeping down.)

Act:

(Divide the class into manageable groups. Ask them to gather together beside you into one big rain cloud.) Look down on the earth and decide exactly where you would like to go--on a leaf in the river, or down a slide, or on someone's nose, or wherever you would like. (Indicate that the "earth" is at the opposite end of the room so they have a greater distance to "fall.") When you are ready and know just what you want to do, raise your hand and I'll blow you off the cloud.

(After all have landed, you might want to side coach something like the following:) "After you have done what you wanted to, what happens to you? Are you floating in a puddle? Oh, oh, here comes a boy who's going to stamp his boot in your puddle. What will you do? Now some of you have splashed into a stream that's flowing very fast! Here comes a big rock. You are going to bounce way up in the air and land on the ground. It feels good to rest on the ground. (Give them a moment to relax. Then continue speaking softly and slowly.) Why don't you sink right down in the ground. Maybe you'll even find a seed who would like a drink."

Composition

Objective:

The activity encourages the students

to become something different than themselves (in this case a rain drop) and to present imaginatively their discoveries.

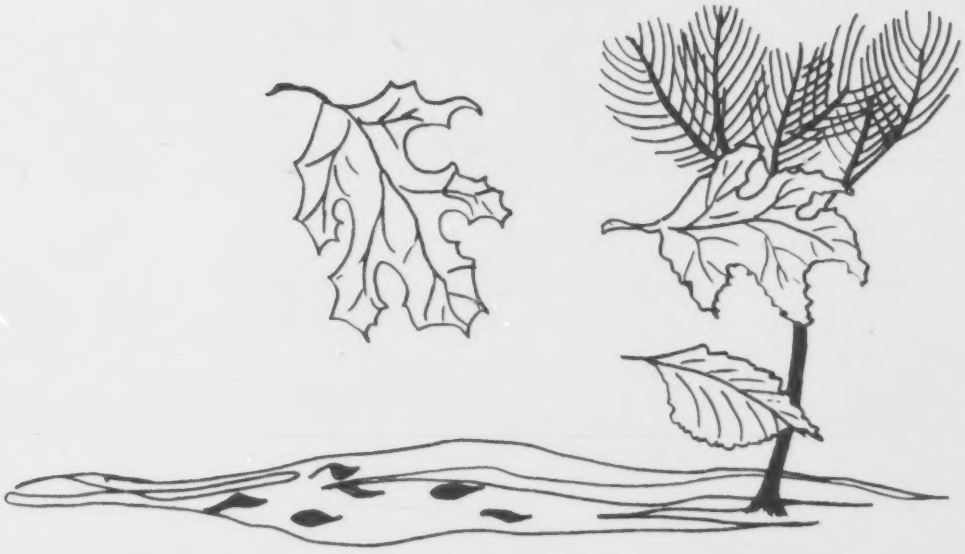
Activity:

Take some time talking with the students about the rain.

What does the rain do?
How do they feel about rain?
What do they like or dislike about the rain?
What would you do if you were a rain drop?

Each student could cut out a large colored rain drop and write or dictate what they would do. This could be written directly on the rain drop or on a separate sheet of paper. The rain drops would make a colorful bulletin board display, with the title IF I WERE A RAIN DROP. . .

"How Do You Know It's Spring?" from Nibble, Nibble by Margaret Wise Brown. A Young Scott Book. Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1959.



Drama

Objectives:

The activities help the students

to heighten sense perception by conscious focus on the senses;

to focus attention on a specific idea.

Introduce:

How do you know it's spring? (List answers on the chalkboard. Point out that most answers have to do with being able to see signs of spring. Then read the poem to the children.)

Act:

Close your eyes for a minute. Think about smells of spring if you can. Can you think of some smells that we notice in the spring?

Now remember what it was like last fall, with all the red and yellow leaves on the trees and on the ground. Let your nose remember what fall smells like. Is there a different smell in the fall than there is in the spring?

Now let's think about what we hear in the fall that lets us know it is fall. Be very quiet for a moment and let your ears remember sounds. (Discuss possibilities such as crunching leaves, football games, Halloween sounds, popping corn. Do the same for spring sounds--possibilities range from lawn mowing, to baseball, to birds chirping.)

Plan A:

(If your class is able to verbalize well enough, you may want to try this game.)

Let's play a game. We'll divide into groups. (About five in each group.) Each group will think of a sound they hear in either the spring or the fall. (You could include the other seasons as well, if you like.) The rest of us will close our eyes and listen while they make the sounds, and try to tell whether it is spring or fall from what we hear. That means that each group may have to talk about what they are doing to help us to guess. I'll give you an example. (Make a sound of a lawnmower--the sound doesn't have to be a very good imitation. Then say something like, "Henry, will you come out and rake up all this grass for me?" Continue with mowing sound.

The groups will probably need considerable teacher guidance in choosing what to do.)

Plan B:

(Each child could draw a picture of a sound typical of either spring or fall. After they are finished, volunteers could tell about their pictures, without saying what the season is, and the rest of the class could guess.)

Language

Objectives:

The following activities can be used when appropriate to help students

discover that we can either tell or ask and that they already know how to tell the difference;

discover that words are used in different ways.

Activities:

1. Ask which lines are questions. Point out the mark at the end of the lines.

Ask if students could rewrite the last two lines so that they weren't questions. (You could smell and hear the Spring. And you could feel the Fall.)

2. Have students think of words that would tell how spring smells and how it feels.

Composition

Objectives:

The activities encourage the student

to explore the sense of smell;

to report his observations orally.

Activities:

Collect a variety of things that students can identify by smell; a flower or tree blossom, cut grass (it may need to be freshly bruised), a strawberry, wet dirt, etc. Blindfold a few students, one at a time, and have them try to identify each item by smelling it.

Compare an artificial flower and a fresh flower (the same flower, if possible, e.g., roses). How are they alike? How are they different?

Discuss the ways we use our noses and how our noses help us enjoy things. Then write the title "My Nose Tells Me" on the board and, as a class composition, write about the things a nose can tell that ears and eyes would never know.

(The lesson might be limited to springtime smells or it might be broadened to include the students' total experiences.)

"The Little Plant" by Kate Louise Brown. From One Thousand Poems for Children by Elizabeth Sechrist. Macrae Smith Company, 1946.

Introduction: (For use if you do not plan to use the drama activity. Otherwise, use the introductory part in the drama section.)

Where do plants and flowers come from? Did you ever stop to think about how a seed grows under the ground until it turns into a flower?

Comprehension:

What did the little plant do? Why did it grow?

Drama

Objectives:

The activities encourage the students

to see the relationship between cause and effect;

to identify with the growing plant and empathize with its feeling of success at achieving its goal.

Materials:

A fern frond or a variety of seeds

Music suggestions: Daphnis and Chloé, "Daybreak" by Ravel
Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun by Débussy
Peer Gynt Suite, "Morning" by Grieg

Introduce:

(There are many ways to approach the idea of seeds growing. Two possibilities are included here.)

1. (Bring a fern frond and let the children examine the seeds (spores actually) on the underside of the frond. Ask them where the seeds go when they are ready to come off. Bring out the idea of the wind carrying the seeds to a new place.)

Curl up into a little seed on the underside of a leaf. In a moment the wind is going to blow you and lift you up and carry you to a nice new place. Think of the nicest place you can--a place you would love to settle down in, if you were a seed. Ready? Here comes the wind! (Several children could be the wind, moving among the seeds and making wind sounds. Or, if you prefer, they could make the sounds without the movement.)

Now the wind has carried you to a lovely place. Snuggle down in that place for a moment and while your seed is resting so comfortably listen to this poem. (Quietly, read the poem "The Little Plant.")

2. (Bring several varieties of seeds to school. Ask the children what they are. Ask if they know what is inside. What is the germ of the seed doing inside there? How do you suppose it feels? After a brief discussion, read the poem "The Little Plant.")

Plan:

When the seed is ready to start growing, what does it do? (Bring out the idea of growing up and also sending roots down.) How could you make it seem as if you were pushing through the earth? Does a plant grow fast or slowly?

Act:

Let's try it. Curl yourself into a little seed. I'll put on some music and let's see how you work to push up through the earth. (Music possibilities are listed above. You may want to side coach while they play. For example: I wonder if the little plant sees anything as it pushes up through the earth, or maybe it keeps its eyes closed. It is almost ready to poke through the ground. There, it's up! Look around, little plants. What do you see?)

Plan:

Why might the plant be very excited when it pokes its head through the ground? Who helps the seed to grow? What does the sun do to help it grow? If you were the sun, how would you warm this little seed underground? How might you show that your rays were going straight through the earth? What kind of a voice might the sun have? (Let as many as want to try out the action of the sun. Then, ask similar questions about the rain.)

Act:

(You could divide into threes--one the seed, one the sun, one the rain. Or, you could have all those who want to be seeds spread around the room and have others be the sun and the rain. Remind them that the seeds are sleeping and don't begin to grow until they feel the sun around them, calling them, and the rain making the earth wet and calling them.

You may want to use music for background again. Or, you may want to repeat the poem slowly while they act it out.)

Language

Objectives:

Any of the following suggested activities can be used when appropriate to help students

discover that different parts of a sentence have different functions and that language enables us to do many different things;

discover that there are different ways to say the same thing and that they already know some of them.

Activities:

1. Have students find words that tell what kind of plant. Have students say the same thing in a different way.(A plant that was dear and little.)

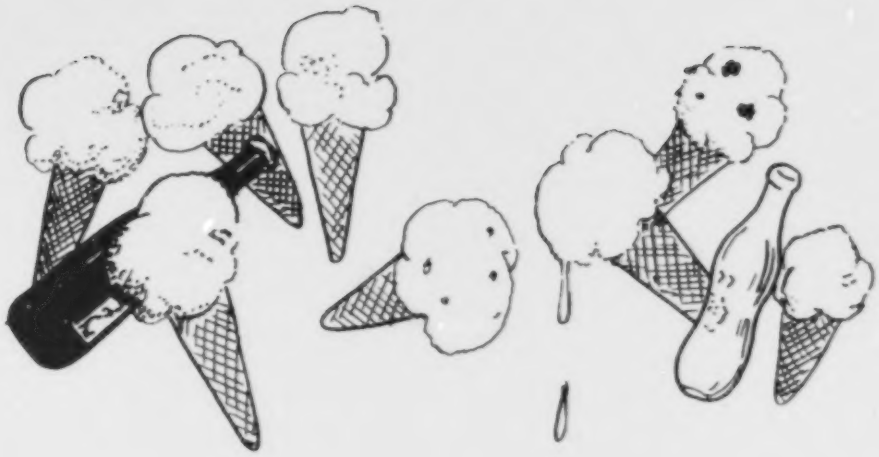
2. Ask students to find a word that tells what kind of raindrops. Ask if they would say it the same way. What are some other ways we might say it? Ask why the author probably did it this way in the poem?

"Dandelion" from Summer-Day Song by Hilda Conkling.
New York: Random House, Inc. /Singer School Division.

Comprehension:

1. What does the poem say the dandelion looks like?
2. Do you think it looks like this?

"The Ice-Cream Man" from Taxis and Toadstools by Rachel Field. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1926.



Introduction:

1. Do you have a Good-Humor Man in your neighborhood? Does anyone know what a Good-Humor Man does? Sometimes he is called the Ice-Cream Man.

2. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) cluster; trundling - pushing or rolling.

Comprehension:

1. In the final verse, what does the poem say the Ice-Cream Man's cart looks like? Do you think it might look this way?

Language

Objectives:

Any of the following activities can be used to help students

focus attention on the meaning of words and develop interest and enjoyment in unusual words;

become aware of "sounds" of language and develop interest and enjoyment in these sounds.

Activities:

1. Ask students to listen for rhyming words (words that sound alike) as you read the poem to them; or, if they have a copy in front of them, or if it is on the board, have them find the words that sound alike.

If you read the poem a second time, stop just before the second of each rhyming word and let the class pronounce it.

Let students put the rhyming words in their book of rhymes.

2. Ask students to find some words that help us see what the Ice-Cream Man's cart looks like.

Ask them to find words that help us "taste" the cones and things to drink.

3. Talk about the meaning of the words cluster and trundling. Ask what else clusters. And what else we trundle. Have students think of sentences using these words.

Composition

Objectives:

The activities help students

explore the different ways one object can be described;

recall past observations and describe them.

Activities:

Ask students to think of something they like to eat or drink on a hot summer day.

What?
How would you describe it so someone else could "see" it? (What color is it? How big is it? Is it heaped or flat? Crunchy? Sloshy? Does it look like anything else you know?)
How does it feel against your hand?
How does it feel and taste in your mouth?
How does it make you feel all over?

After a number of ideas have been discussed write student's responses on the board or on chart paper. These may easily be written in poetry form:

In summer I like
to (drink). . . . .
. . . . . .
to (drink). . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
and (eat). . . . .
. . . . . .
etc.

Then ask students to think of something they like to eat or drink on a cold winter day. Ask the same kinds of questions to help students think about favorite hot foods and drinks. Their responses may be added to the chart:

But in winter I like
to (drink). . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
etc.

"November Night" from Verse by Adelaide Crapsey. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Introduction:

Did you watch the leaves fall from a tree? Did you ever try to hear them fall? What do you think it would sound like?

Composition

Objectives:

The activities give the students practice

in sharpening sense perception--in this case, listening;

in describing what they hear by using comparisons.

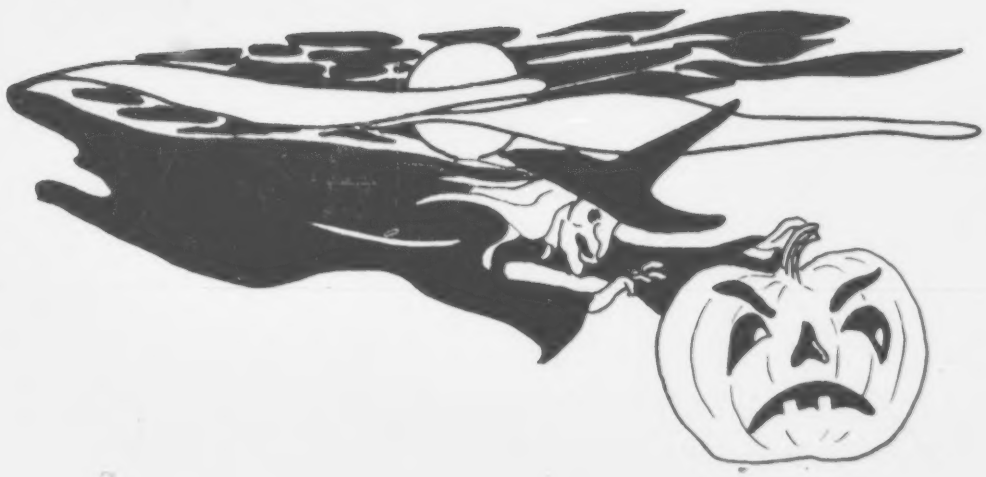
Activities:

1. Think about other sounds in nature.

   What does the rain sound like when it falls on your head? When it falls on an umbrella?
   Does grass make any sound when it comes through the ground? Can you think of an interesting way to tell about it?
   Does a flower make any sound when it bursts into bloom? How could you describe the opening of a flower?

2. Using the form below have the students describe sounds.

   The _____ sounds like _____.



"Halloween" from Children's Literature for Dramatization by Geraldine Brain Siks. New York: Harper & Row, 1964.

Introduction: (For use if you do not plan to use the drama activity. Otherwise, use the introductory part in the drama section.)

1. What things do we think of when we think of Halloween? What do they look like? How do you feel about them?

2. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) eerie - scary.

Drama

Objectives:

The activities encourage students

to become involved in a Halloween mood;

to use body movement to create various Halloween characters;

to develop an understanding of working in a group;

to experiment with their own voices in a choral reading exercise.

Materials:

Candle
Incense (or something else that will produce visible smoke)
Appropriately scary mood music, such as Bartok's Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta, Disney's Haunted House, Stravinsky's Firebird Suite.

Introduce:

(Darken the room. Play the music in the background. Ask the children what happens on Halloween night.

A possible lead-in to the poem could be the following: "I know someone who wrote a poem about what happens on Halloween night. Listen and see if you get a picture in your mind of what is happening." Light the candle. Present the poem, letting the sound of the words help convey the meaning. At the end, abruptly blow the candle out.)

Plan:

Could you picture the witches flying? What were they flying on? Where were they going?

Act:

Let's see if you can turn yourself into a witch that would look like an ugly shadow as it flies in the sky. When you look ugly enough, I'll give you the signal to begin. (Use music for background, if you want to.)

(After they have flown for a minute or so, call all the witches to come to you for a conclave. You can assume the role of "Head Witch" to help them plan and exert control when necessary. The purpose for the witches' meeting is to plan the spells they are going to make for Halloween. "What kind of tricks would you like to play on people? You are all quite new witches, what do you think would be good to put in a witches' brew, to make it cast a powerful spell?" Some may not know what a witches' brew is. Each one can go out to find one ingredient for the brew and then stir the pot. When it is ready, they can fly out over the earth, cast their spells, and watch what happens. Then report back.)

Plan:

The poem talked about another Halloween creature, too. Does anyone remember? The poem said that "White, stiff ghosts do float, Silently like mystery smoke." How does mystery smoke move? (Light the incense and watch the smoke. Ask the children to comment on the way it moves.)

Act:

(Ask them to change themselves into ghosts that move like mystery smoke. They can make ghostly sounds too, to scare people.)

Conclude:

Oh, oh, the clock is beginning to strike midnight. That means that all Halloween creatures must disappear until next year. Let your ghost float away and back to your seat, as soundlessly as if you don't touch the ground at all. Close your eyes for a minute and watch the ghosts disappear into the air. (Allow a minute for relaxing.) When I tell you to open your eyes, the lights will be on and there won't be a sign of a witch or a ghost around.

Choral reading:

Divide the group into three parts (witches, ghosts, and pumpkins) and learn the poem for a choral reading. Tape it so the class can hear themselves and talk about how it can be improved. They might share with another class on Halloween.

Language

Objectives:

The following activities could be used to help students

to become aware that words are used for different purposes;

to become aware of sounds of language and to develop interest in and enjoyment of these sounds.

Activities:

1. Have students listen for sounds used in the poem.

2. Ask them to find words that tell what kind (what kind of creatures, witches, etc.) Ask them to find words that tell how ghosts float and how pumpkins glow.

"Autumn Woods" from A World to Know by James S. Tippett. New York: Harper & Row, 1938.

Language

Objectives:

Any of the following activities can be used to help students

discover that different parts of a sentence have different functions and that language enables us to do many different things
--some parts tell what kind
--some parts tell when;

Activities:

1. In stanza 1, ask students to find the lines that tell when. Ask them to think of some other times when they might like the woods. Have them complete the following. Write what they say on the board and underline the parts that tell when.

I like the woods when _____.

You could expand this to include such things as

I like the night when _____.
I like the morning when _____.
I like the town (or city, or country, or beach, etc.) when _____.

2. In the last line of stanza 1, ask what words tell us what kind of sound the wind makes. Have them think of some other kinds of sounds.

3. In stanza 2, talk about meaning of rustle.

Ask what words tell us what kind of leaves. Have students think of some other kinds of leaves and put them in sentences (red leaves, soft green leaves, etc.). If you write the sentences, underline the words that tell what kind.

4. Ask what words help us see the autumn woods. What words help us hear the sounds in the autumn woods?

5. Have students think of some other things that one can do in autumn woods and complete the following:

I can rustle the leaves
In autumn
And I can make a bed. . . .

I can _____ in autumn

And I can _____.

Or use a different setting:

In spring I can _____.
In winter I can _____.

"The Snowman" by Lima L. Henderson. From For a Child: Great Poems Old and New, collected by Wilma McFarland. Westminster Press.

Comprehension:

What do you think a coal-black smile on a snowman is? (Explain the use of coal for snowmen's mouths; coal is not used in the Pacific Northwest.)

Drama

Objectives:

The activities help the students

to heighten sense perception by conscious focus on the senses;

to relax the body.

Introduce and Act:

How do you feel when you wake up in the morning and you find it has snowed for the first time? What do you do? (All can pantomime putting snow clothes on, if somebody responds in that way.) What is the first thing you do when you go outside? (Listen to a couple of ideas, then tell them that instead of talking about it, they can do it.) Go out into the snow and do the first thing you like to do when it snows.

Plan and Act:

(Probably someone will have been making a snowman which you can notice. If not, ask what they like to make with the snow.)

Let's all make the most wonderful snowmen we can. It takes a lot of work, but it's fun too. (Side coach while they play, helping them to focus on details of cold hands, how heavy the snowball is to push when it gets big, what they'll use for the face, etc.)

(After they have finished making their snowmen, tell them to sit down and look at their snowmen while you read a poem about a snowman.)

Plan and Act:

(After you have read the poem, continue.) Pretend that you are the snowman. Get into a position that is like the snowman you just built. What does his face look like to start out? Try to make your face like his. The sun is shining down on you. "His happy smile has run? He's slipping and He's sliding! He's melting in the sun! He'll soon be gone--Don't worry--I'll make another One!"

(They might like to work in pairs next. One person can be building the snowman and the other can be the snowman, showing how it gets bigger, adding arms, head, face, etc. Then the snowman begins to melt.)

Conclude:

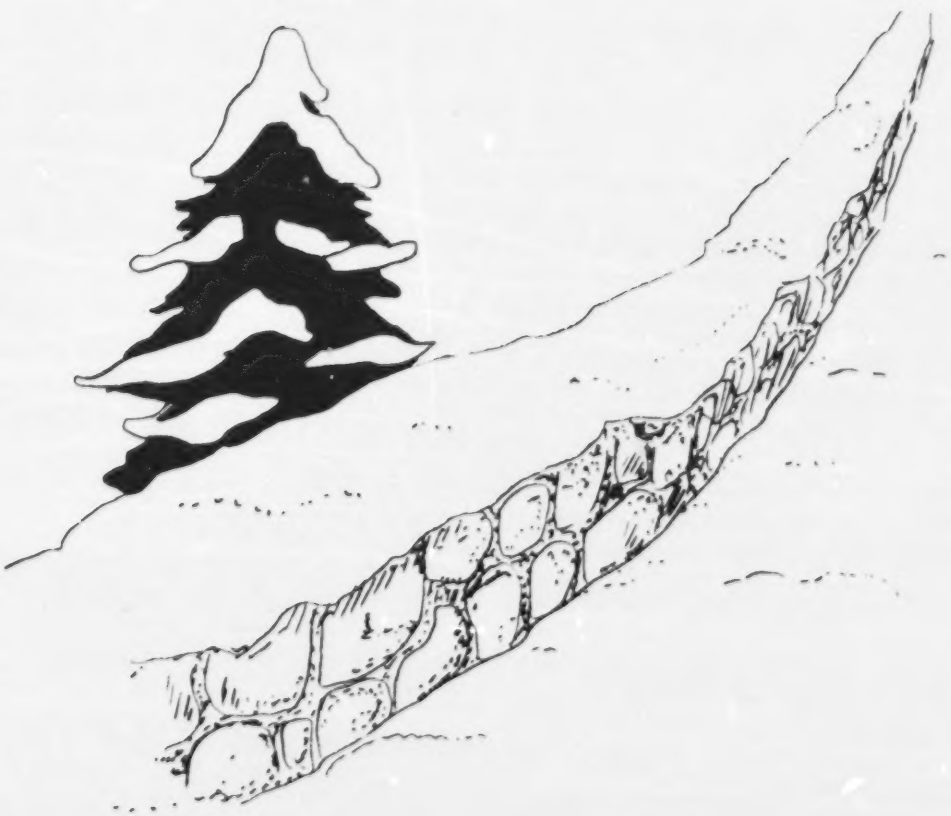
Let's go inside, take off our snowy clothes and sit at our desks. Pretend you are a big snowball somebody put inside for a trick. Let's see what would happen to you in this warm room.

I Look Outside and Think

I look outside and think
"It's snowing!" But no,
it is only the wind
blowing thousands of leaves
all about. Enough
to make a good leafman.

--W. V.

"White Fields" from Collected Poems by James Stephens. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926.



Introduction:

1. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties: Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) filigree - a delicate and intricate pattern; here used to describe the footprints of children in the snow.

Composition

Objectives:

These activities should

give students practice in using language to visualize things not present.

Activities:

Take a piece of white butcher paper and tape it to the board. With a paint brush, chalk, or crayon, dot in footprints following the ideas in the poem (making at least two separate patterns of prints) across the butcher paper. The prints could be different sizes, too. Read the poem.

Ask the children to explain what is "happening" on the butcher paper. Read the poem through a second time while one of the group follows the footprints along on the paper. Relate the "walking in snow" to their experiences--drawing out experiences with snow of all kinds.

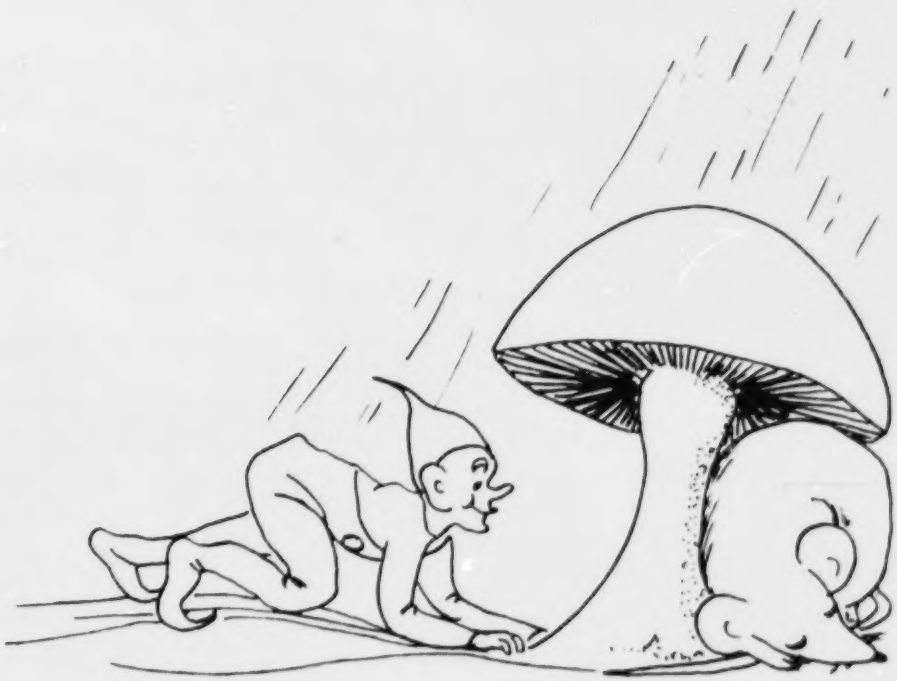
Have the children move around the room as if they are walking in deep snow. Ask them to pretend that they are doing something in snow that they would like to do. Follow up by having them explain what it is they are doing.

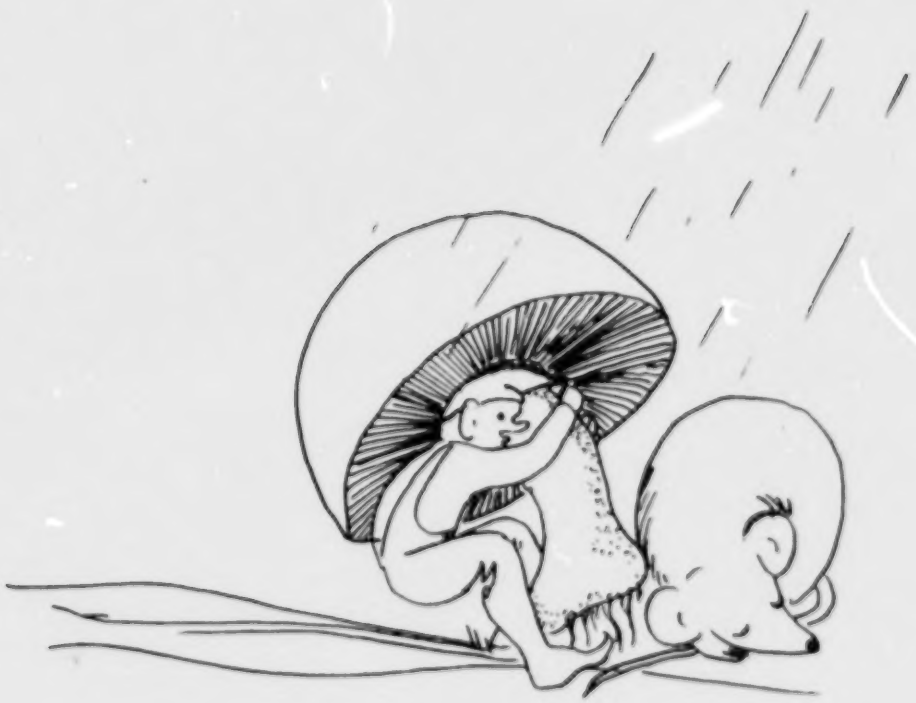
Variations:

The children could make a snow mural with the butcher paper, or individual snow pictures.

You could also have them "act out" the poem, as you reread it again.

"The Elf and the Dormouse" by Oliver Herford.
From A Saint Nicholas Anthology: The Early Years,
edited by Burton Frye. New York: Appleton-Century-
Crofts, Inc., 1969.





Introduction: (For use if you do not plan to use the drama activity. Otherwise, use the introductory part in the drama section.)

1. Who do you think invented the umbrella? Here is a story about how the umbrella was invented.

2. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties; Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) lest - for fear that; lamented - mourned for; Dormouse - a small mouse that looks a little like a squirrel

Comprehension:

What was the Elf's problem? How did he solve it?

Drama

Objectives:

The activities help the students

to use imagination coupled with clues from the poem to clearly visualize the elf;

to notice how the imagination can be used to solve problems.

Material:

Music - Grand Canyon Suite by Ferde Grofé

Introduce:

Have you ever been caught in a rain shower, when you didn't have a raincoat or boots or umbrella, or anything to keep you dry? What happened? What did you do?

The rain can be a problem when we aren't prepared for it. It's a problem for big people like we are. Think what a problem it would be if we were elves only this big. (Show how small with your hands. Or, if you have a little ceramic or cloth elf you might want to bring it out at this time.) Why would the rain be even more of a problem if you were that small? How big would a raindrop seem to an elf?

I know a poem that tells about what happened to an elf who got caught in the rain. Listen to hear what he did. (Tell them the "Elf and the Dormouse" by Oliver Herford.)

Plan:

What was the elf afraid of? (The dormouse and the rain.) Why didn't he want to get wet? (Maybe he had new clothes on, or perhaps he was going to a party.) What did he think when he saw that first drop of rain? What do you suppose he may have tried to hide under before he found the toadstool? (A leaf, a flower, a twig, etc.) At last he found the toadstool. What a relief.

Act:

Let's act out the first part of the poem. The elf is merrily going through the forest--maybe he is picking flowers, or playing a game, or watching animals, or finding a present for someone. I'll tell you when it begins to rain. Then let's see how the elf frantically tries to find a dry shelter.

("Cloudburst" from the Grand Canyon Suite can be put on after they have played as elves in the forest for awhile. You will need to find the right place on the record and mark it at the appropriate spot, so it can be found quickly.

You may want to help heighten the mood by side coaching while they play--admonishing them not to get wet, noting how the leaf they are under has a hole in it, etc. After they have found the toadstool, you can either stop and talk about what happens, comparing the elf's finding the dormouse to the way they would feel if they discovered a tiger in their room, or you can continue on, side coaching the action. For example: "What a relief--a nice, dry place. What's that noise? (Whisper) It sounds like a snore. Look on the other side of the toadstool. Oh no! A dormouse. Quiet! Don't move! What if he wakes up! What are you going to do? It's still raining. If you leave you'll get soaked! (One of the children will either whisper what to do, or start to tug at the toadstool. Draw attention to the idea, still whispering.) Whew--those are tough toadstools. You really have to tug. Pull. Tug. At last! Away you fly!" The last quarter of "Cloudburst" is good for triumphant flying away.)

Plan:

(After they have played the elf, ask them to sit down to plan the other characters.) Why is the dormouse under the toadstool? Why is he sleeping? What happens to him when his toadstool goes away? What does he do?

Act:

(You can divide them into two's or three's. The third one can be the toadstool. Be sure each elf has a specific toadstool and dormouse to go to.

The tendency sometimes is for many elves to go to the same dormouse and toadstool. They will probably want to replay the story several times. They may want to plan out a specific ending with the dormouse.)

Language

Objectives:

The following activities can be used at appropriate times to help students

discover that different parts of a sentence have different functions and that language enables us to do many different things:
--some parts tell where
--some words stand for what we are talking about
--some words tell how;

discover that we choose certain ways of saying things for special purposes (e. g., rhymes and meter in poetry);

become aware of regular order through observing deviation from the usual word order.

Activities:

1. Stanza 1: Ask what words tell where and what tell why.

2. Stanza 3: Talk about meaning of lest. Ask what he stands for. Ask if he always stands for the same person. Point out that students know who "he" is without anyone telling them.

3. Ask if students would usually say "Trembled the wee Elf," or "Crept the wee Elf." How would they usually say it? Give them some other sentences and have them invert them in the same way. (The little cat jumped on the table. The small bird hopped on the branch, etc.)

4. In stanza 5, ask what word tells how he flew. Ask also who "tugged till the toadstool. . . ." Point out that students know even though the word has been left out.

5. In stanza 7, who is "he?"

Ask what word tells how he lamented.

Composition

Objectives:

The activities encourage the students

to use their imaginations to explore a familiar environment;

to see the world from another's point of view (in this case, a small elf).

Activities:

Take students on a walk to look for other things in nature that might be used by imaginary creatures (perhaps a very small creature). For example, students may find a leaf that could be used for a hat, a piece of an acorn that suggests a cap, a hollow stem for a drinking straw, etc. If possible, have students bring the things back to the classroom to share and discuss.

What imaginary creature do you think might have used this _____?
How might he have used it?

Ask students to think of other things in nature and how imaginary creatures might have used them. Let students make up a story of an imaginary creature's discovery of a new and interesting use for something found in nature.

"Names" by Leclaire G. Alger. From Perhaps and Perchance, compiled by Laura Cathon and Thusnelda Schmidt. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Introduction:

1. Do you know what a pussywillow is? Why do you think it got that name?

2. Vocabulary: (Suggested difficulties; Do not kill the selection with too much preliminary vocabulary drill.) catkins - pussywillows.

Language

Objectives:

The following activity can be used to show students

that words change and grow;

that words can have more than one meaning, or can be used or combined with other words to create new words and new names for things.

Activities:

This would be a good poem to introduce the question, "Where do words come from?" Have students find words within other words (pussy and willow in pussywillow, etc.) and suggest how such things got their names. We know the origin of some, but not all, but the point that you might make is that we sometimss give things names that have nothing to do with what they are. When we need a word, it is made up and becomes part of our language.

Pussywillows were probably so named because they look something like a small cat, and the same would be true of catkins. Strawberries may have been so named because of the strawlike runners that trail off from the plant on the ground. Eggplant may have come from the shape of the fruit of the plant which resembles the shape of an egg. In the Middle Ages there was a superstition that butterflies stole milk and butter. This may be the source of the name. Kingfishers do catch fish, and they have a crest like a crown, and this may possibly be the origin of the name.

Some possibilities: buttercup, hopscotch, larkspur

Do You Know

Who lives in a house of glass so round
And never, never makes a sound?

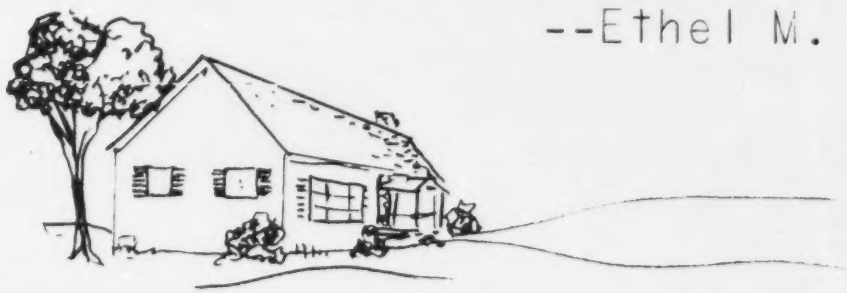
Who lives in a small wire house that
swings,
And sings and sings and sings and sings?

Who lives in a straw house in a tree
And hides her babies from you and me?

Who lives in a hollow tree in the wood
That he fills with nuts for his winter
food?

Who lives in a house with Father and
Mother
And maybe a sister and maybe a brother?

--Ethel M. Wegert



Introduction: (For use if you do not plan to use the drama activity. Otherwise use the introductory part in the drama section.)

Do you know any riddles? Here is a poem that asks riddles. Who can guess the answers?

Drama

Objectives:

The following activities will help students

be aware of likenesses and differences;

explore the use of movement to express different characters.

Activities:

A Guessing Game. Read one verse at a time to the class. After each verse, the children can respond by moving as the animal would and doing something they have seen him do before. They should not verbalize the answer.

After they have acted out the responses to the poem, they may want to think of other animals and act them out for each other to guess. For example, a dog in his dog house, a mouse, a bunny, etc.

When they think of another animal and its house, they could be guided to compose a couple of lines about it, using the construction of the original poem.

Composition

Objectives:

The following activities will help

sharpen the children's perceptions of the familiar world;

show students that they too can "create" a poem.

Activities:

The students have probably guessed the answer to each verse in the poem. Have the class do one together and write it on the board. Ask them to think about another animal.

Where does it live?
What does it do?

Each student can write two lines. Have them read their own so that the rest of the class can guess what it is.

"The Bear" by Carl Memling. From Merry-Go-Round, edited by Leland B. Jacobs and Jo Jasper Turner. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1966.

Drama

Objectives:

The activities should encourage students

to act out in their own way the narrative line of the poem;

to listen carefully to directions within a poem read by the teacher;

to imagine beyond their own experience, using the experience of the poem as a springboard.

Introduce:

Have you ever seen a bear walk? Show me how a heavy old bear would walk. (Let them explore the bear movement for a minute.)

I know a little poem about a bear. Let's act it out as I tell it. This is the way it starts: "The bear climbed up the mountain." (Everyone climbs up and up.) "And what do you think he saw?" (Go right on with the poem before they respond.)

"He saw another mountain,
and what do you think he did? (Allow them to answer if they wish.)
He climbed the other mountain, (Act out.)
and what do you think he saw?
He saw another mountain,
and what do you think he did? (They will probably respond in unison.)
He climbed the other mountain,
and what do you think he saw? (Let them respond before you give the next line.)
Picnickers!
And what do you think he did?" ("Do it!" Let them act out their immediate responses without talking about it.)

Plan:

(Sit down and discuss, bringing out more details.) Why was the bear interested in the picnickers? What do you suppose he smelled? How did the good smells make him feel? Do you think he charged down to the picnickers, or did he quietly sneak down? (Either response is valid.)

What were the picnickers eating? What do you suppose they did when they saw the bear? (If they say "They ran," ask where they ran to, did they pick up their things, what did they do then?)

What did the bear do?

Act:

Who would like to be the picnickers? (Cast. Tell them to determine where they are eating and what they are eating.)

Who would like to be the bear? (There can be more than one.)

We will start with the bear climbing the last mountain. My, he must be tired and hungry after climbing three mountains!

Evaluate:

Picnickers, were you afraid when you saw the bears? Audience, what did they do that let you know they were afraid? How did you know the bears were hungry?

Act:

This time let's start from the beginning of the poem. Remember there are three mountains before the bears see the picnickers. The more he climbs, the more tired and hungry he gets. (Choose different children for the parts this time. Those who are in the audience can say as much of the poem as they can with you, while the others act it out.)

(You might want to discuss other possible endings to the poem and how the action of the bear would change as a result. They could act out alternative endings, like "hunters," "honey trees," "a lake," etc.)

Composition

Objective:

The suggested activities encourage students

to use imagination in creating and illustrating a story.

Activities:

1. Have the students dictate a group composition telling what the bear did when he saw the picnickers. The story can be illustrated and displayed on the bulletin board or in book form.

2. Each student might write and illustrate his own story.

3. The students might each draw an imaginative map of the trail the bear took going up and down the mountains to the picnic ground. They can each tell their story of the bear's walk along the mountain trail.

Have the students think about some of the suggested questions as they draw their maps:

a. Did your bear meet any animals on the way?
b. What would he have done if he had seen a beehive full of honey?

Counting-Out Rhyme

Hinty, Minty, cuty corn,
Apple seed, and apple thorn,
Wire, briar, limber lock,
Three geese in a flock.
One flew east, and one flew west,
One flew over the cuckoo's nest.

--Anonymous

Introduction:

Do you know any counting-out rhymes? Of course you do. How about eeny meany miney mo? Here's another one. Counting-out rhymes usually don't make much sense. They use words just for the sound and they don't mean anything.

Rinky Rally Billy Bo

When Rinky Rally Billy Bo
comes bopping down the street,
all the children run outside
to greet his hundred feet.

On every foot that slaps the street
he wears a tennis shoe.
But just two hands to tie them up
is many hands too few.

Because he has so many feet,
so many shoes to tie,
the children help him lace them up,
and then he says goodbye.

Then Rinky Rally Billy Bo
goes bopping out of sight,
but he'll be back for sure for help
to take them off tonight.

--W. V.

Introduction:

1. Do you ever have trouble tying your shoes? Do you ever need any help? Do you ever have to help someone else tie his shoes?

2. What would you do if you had a hundred feet, and had to tie all those shoes?

Composition

Objective

The following activities help students

use their imagination as a basis for writing.

Activity:

Discuss with the students how Rinky Rally Billy Bo would look every day slapping down the street with 100 tennis shoes. Ask them to think about what he does every day when he goes hopping out of sight.

Where might he go?
Who would he see?
Does he wear tennis shoes for a very special reason?

Have the students write a story about something Rinky Rally Billy Bo does when he goes hopping out of sight.

Have students draw pictures of what they think Rinky Rally Billy Bo looks like.